



World Federation of  
Personnel Management Associations

# **HR Competencies and Professional Standards**

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## **Executive summary**

The aim of this World Federation of Personnel Management Associations' project was to develop a worldwide definition of what an HR professional is and does in terms of a 'global set of core competencies'. The approach taken was to consider the range of practices in different countries' professional standards and certification programmes by means of a literature review and worldwide surveys.

The literature review examines the issue of 'professionalism' and defines the term competencies for the purposes of this project. It identifies how competencies can vary in weighting in the context of different job roles and models of personnel management. The issue of outsourcing certain HR activities is also raised as one that will affect the skill requirements within an organisation. The development of an HR competency model is advocated, and a summary is provided of the common core competencies. Variations in these core competencies are discussed against national, organisational and time contexts. Competency is also identified as one of the key enabling factors for an organisation to create its own sustainable competitive advantage in the marketplace.

The personnel management association survey gathers information about the associations themselves, and about their provision of education and training programmes, examining the skill and knowledge requirements of personnel practitioners in each of the 22 participant countries. The data from the questionnaires corroborates many of the issues identified in the literature review, and provides practical evidence for analysing the activities of personnel management associations around the world.

The HR body of knowledge, and the way this is being taught and assessed around the world, is the focus for the detailed analysis of the documentation provided by associations in addition to completing the survey. The body of knowledge is presented as a Global Framework of Skills and Knowledge. This is broken down into a detailed description of what practitioners are expected to know and to be able to do in order to operate at a support, professional or strategic level in the management and development of people. A number of examples are presented of different mechanisms for delivering, assessing and certifying the attainment of professional standards. These are collated to provide a summary of the options available to associations wishing to develop such activities.

There are a number of implications for the personnel function arising from the findings of study, not least of all to determine a strategy to meet the challenges of the emerging environment. This strategy can be determined at a number of levels, including individual, functional, organisational and national, and this study has demonstrated that it can also benefit from input at an international level. The commonalities between the activities and standards of personnel practitioners in each of the countries involved far outweigh the differences, showing that countries have the opportunity to learn from each other.

The report summarises practical ideas for the content of professional standards, and how these might be translated into sets of skills and knowledge for the development of personnel professionals. It also emphasises the importance of considering the national, industrial/sectoral and organisational context to ensure the skills and knowledge being developed are appropriate to the practitioner's job role and level.

## **Preface**

This project was funded by the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations (WFPMA), supported by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), UK and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), USA. The WFPMA was founded in 1976, and currently represents over 300,000 people management professionals in around 50 national personnel associations. The Secretariat, which is responsible for the administration of the WFPMA, is currently held by the CIPD.

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## **Contents**

	<b>Page</b>
<b><u>I. INTRODUCTION</u></b> .....	1
I.1 <u>The project</u> .....	1
I.2 <u>Definition of terminology</u> .....	2
I.3 <u>The relevance of HR competencies today</u> .....	2
<b><u>II. LITERATURE REVIEW</u></b> .....	4
II.1. <u>Introduction</u> .....	4
II.2. <u>HR as a profession</u> .....	4
II.3. <u>Definitions of HR competencies</u> .....	6
II.4. <u>Developing an HR competency model</u> .....	8
II.5. <u>Variations in HR competency requirements</u> .....	9
II.5.1. <u>National context</u> .....	10
II.5.2. <u>Organisational context</u> .....	11
II.5.3. <u>Time context</u> .....	12
II.6. <u>Competency acquisition</u> .....	13
II.7. <u>Summary</u> .....	15
<b><u>III. METHODOLOGY</u></b> .....	16
III.1 <u>The survey of personnel management associations</u> .....	16
III.2 <u>Second survey in USA</u> .....	18
III.3 <u>The academic literature survey</u> .....	18
<b><u>IV. SURVEY FINDINGS</u></b> .....	19
IV.1 <u>Background information on personnel management associations</u> .....	19
IV.2 <u>Education and training</u> .....	22
IV.3 <u>Skills and knowledge</u> .....	26
IV.4 <u>Academic questionnaires</u> .....	31
IV.4.1 <u>English language responses</u> .....	31
IV.4.2 <u>Non-English language responses</u> .....	31
<b><u>V. THE HR BODY OF KNOWLEDGE</u></b> .....	32
V.1 <u>Introduction</u> .....	32
V.2 <u>Global framework of the HR body of knowledge</u> .....	33

V.3 Contextual analysis .....	34
V.3.1 HRM principles.....	34
V.3.2 The work environment.....	35
V.3.3 Job levels and roles.....	38
V.4 Elements of skills and knowledge.....	40
<b>VI. TRAINING AND EDUCATION .....</b>	<b>45</b>
VI.1 Introduction.....	45
VI.2 Delivery options.....	45
VI.3 Case examples.....	45
VI.3.1 Training courses in Portugal (APG).....	46
VI.3.2 Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management (IHRM).....	46
VI.3.3 Human Resources Institute of New Zealand (HRINZ).....	47
VI.3.4 Training programmes in Singapore (SHRI).....	48
VI.3.5 Hungarian Association for Human Resources Management (OHE).....	48
<b>VII. ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION .....</b>	<b>49</b>
VII.1 Introduction.....	49
VII.2 Mechanisms.....	49
VII.3 Case examples.....	49
VII.3.1 Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI) - USA.....	49
VII.3.2 Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario (HRPAO) - Canada.....	50
VII.3.3 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) - UK.....	51
<b>VIII. CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>52</b>
VIII.1 Project boundaries.....	52
VIII.2 The status of HR and competencies.....	52
VIII.3 The associations and their activities.....	52
VIII.4 The core HR body of knowledge.....	53
VIII.5 Teaching and development of HR specialists.....	54
VIII.6 Implications.....	55
<b>IX. REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Appendix 1. Personnel management associations questionnaire.....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Appendix 2. Survey participants .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Appendix 3. Academic questionnaires.....</b>	<b>74</b>
3a. English language responses.....	74
3b. English language references .....	75

3c. Non-English language responses .....	77
3d. Non-English language references .....	77
<b><u>Appendix 4. The CRANET survey</u></b> .....	79
<b><u>Appendix 5. HR competencies identified in the literature</u></b> .....	80

**List of figures**

**Page**

Figure 1. World map showing the total spread of responses received from countries which were members of the WFPMA at the time of the project.....16

Figure 2. World map showing the spread of personnel management questionnaires received .....17

Figure 3. World map showing the spread of academic literature questionnaires received.....18

Figure 4. Criteria for categories of membership.....19

Figure 5a. Number of members - associations with less than 2000 members in total .....20

Figure 5b. Number of members - associations with between 2000 and 10000 members in total .....20

Figure 5c. Number of members - associations with more than 10000 members in total .....20

Figure 6a. Number of paid employees - associations with less than 20 employees in total .....21

Figure 6b. Number of paid employees - associations with more than 20 employees in total .....21

Figure 7. Members with a university degree.....22

Figure 8. Most common degree disciplines among personnel management association members .....22

Figure 9. The importance of education levels.....23

Figure 10. Associations who run personnel management certified courses of study.....23

Figure 11. Modes of study.....24

Figure 12. Do you award certificates for demonstrating competence?.....24

Figure 13. Do you offer training courses?.....25

Figure 14. Training courses offered .....25

Figure 15. Most popular training courses .....26

Figure 16. Range of association guidelines produced .....27

Figure 17. Do you produce a code of conduct?.....27

Figure 18. Recruitment, retention, promotion and termination .....28

Figure 19. Performance measurement, reward and development .....29

Figure 20. Employee communication and the working environment.....30

Figure 21. Primary responsibilities of support/administrative roles .....39

Figure 22. Primary responsibilities of professional/specialist roles .....39

Figure 23. Primary responsibilities of senior/strategic roles .....39

## **I. Introduction**

### **I.1 The project**

The aim of the project was to develop a worldwide definition of what an HR professional is and does in terms of a 'global set of core competencies'. The first step was to establish how plausible this is, and if it were appropriate the project would continue further to define these competencies in detail. This having been achieved, the second phase of the project looked at defining a set of professional standards. The approach taken was to consider the range of practices in different countries' professional standards and certification programmes by means of a literature review and worldwide surveys.

The specific research questions that the project was designed to address are:

1.1 How do different countries define the standards for what constitutes an HR professional? What are the competencies they will need to be able to apply at the various levels of their professional activities, from the operational to the most strategic?

1.2 How do national associations certify the attainment of professional standards? What are the learning and development routes they might pursue in order to keep up-to-date those competencies?

1.3 Are there generic standards of professionalism in HR common to all or many countries? What are the professional standards that might be appropriate to certify their attainment of those competencies?

1.4 Could standards be expressed in such a way that they would be helpful to emerging professional associations wishing to develop HR professionalism in their country?

As we can see, one of the key outcomes that this project addresses is whether the experiences and knowledge of different countries, practitioners and academics can be combined to produce a set of 'guidelines' for credible learning systems and certification particularly for developing associations. Other anticipated results included the potential mutual recognition of qualifications, raised standards of professionalism and the stimulation of topics for further discussion. It was therefore necessary to apply methodological rigour to ensure the status of the findings of the project.

In this examination of how different countries define the standards for personnel work, our findings have been based on the experiences of personnel management associations; in general, the work of national vocational qualification bodies has not been included. The information presented in this report is averaged over a variety of types of association membership and is a collection of what is currently done or perceived to be done.

This report examines the HR practices currently being implemented around the world, providing a description of the picture gleaned from the survey of personnel management associations. The report will focus on the commonalities observed, and where there were

interesting and significant divergences from these commonalities. It will also examine the HR body of knowledge, and the way this is being taught and assessed around the world.

## 1.2 Definition of terminology

Although we will not enter here into the academic and practitioner debate on the definition of the relatively new terminology of ‘competencies’ in the HRM field, it is important to explain what we mean by ‘competencies’ in the framework of this report<sup>1</sup>. Three interchangeable terms have been used in this study:

- ♣ competencies
- ♣ capabilities
- ♣ skills, knowledge, attributes and other characteristics.

One definition by Kochanski (1996 pp.4) provides a useful description of competencies for this project. He defines competencies as the success factors that enable the assessment, feedback, development and reward processes for individuals to take place. Holmes (1992) also gives us a useful definition of competence-based qualifications, which are fundamental to the aims of this project. Competence-based qualifications provide a statement about what a person is capable of doing rather than what they have done in the past. Measuring competence is not about performance to a standard, i.e. what a person actually does, but it is about what a person is capable of doing. It is a measure of anticipated performance based on inference from past performance, often based on observation. Competency definition is also based primarily on defining *superior* performance, rather than average levels of performance.

Equally, we are not entering the debate on the distinction between ‘personnel management’ (PM) and ‘human resource management’ (HRM) as this takes on new complexities with the inclusion of linguistic issues between countries. Here, we use the terms ‘personnel management’ and ‘human resource management’ interchangeably, to cover all activities undertaken in the management and development of people in the workplace. It includes such terms as ‘personnel and development’ and ‘training and development’ roles.

## 1.3 The relevance of HR competencies today

In the HR literature, competencies are receiving increasing attention stimulated by a number of changes in the global business environment. From a US perspective, the effects of increased international competition and the growth of alliances, joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions are highlighted. There have been and still are rapid technological advances occurring and increasingly employee expectations about work are changing. There is also a debate around the size of the pool of skilled talent in different countries. And as organisations become more global it can be argued that the need for standardisation within the profession is growing.

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<sup>1</sup> A useful point of reference for those interested in the history and definition of the use of competencies and competency models in HR can be found in Appendix 1 (Competencies: A Review of the Literature and Bibliography) to the first report published by the Canadian Council of Human Resource Associations (CCHRA) in connection with their ongoing Human Resources Profession Competencies Project (currently available via the CCHRA website: <http://www.chrpcanada.com>).

Within this environment HR goals are also changing. The new demands being placed on HR staff are to develop leaders and more generally to recruit and retain a quality workforce. Alongside this, there needs to be an increase in workforce productivity in the face of heightened competition, and so compensation then needs to be aligned with business strategy. It then also becomes essential to develop employees in order to achieve the organisation's goals. Individual capabilities within the organisation as a whole are becoming more important than purely within a defined job, and hence, individuals are being recognised as capable of influencing an organisation's success (Porter 1998).

In the face of this new environment, there is recognition that current HR has both strengths and weaknesses. New skills and knowledge need to be developed in integrating global and local perspectives. Another area seen as a weakness in much HR literature is the use of technology to support HR strategy. The resulting barriers to the future role of HR are therefore clear. They centre on the competencies of the HR staff and the standards of the HR function.

## **II. Literature review**

### **II.1. Introduction**

In this section of the report on global HR competencies and professional standards, we examine the contribution that the existing literature can make to our understanding and knowledge of this subject.

First, we consider the debate that is apparent in much HR literature around the issue of to what extent HR can be classed as a profession. Against this setting we then identify the body of knowledge associated with HR, paying particular attention to the definition of HR competencies and job roles. We then consider how the HR function contributes to the organisation as a whole. The issue of developing a competency model is discussed, raising the question whether HR practices, and hence the required skills and knowledge, vary according to different countries and organisations. Finally, we look at how HR practitioners can go about achieving the levels of education and training required within the organisation.

### **II.2. HR as a profession**

There is a body of literature that centres on the debate about whether HR can be classed as a 'profession'. Our review starts with a very bold statement from Losey in the USA that "human resource management is a profession" (1997, pp.147). He justifies this by stating that there is an established body of knowledge that can be taught, learned and tested, and that there is an ethical code of conduct. However, Ulrich & Eichinger claim that: "HR must become more professional" (1998, pp.1). They argue that HR *should* be a 'profession', but that it has not reached that status yet. There is a need for an accepted and commonly known body of knowledge, common standards for entry and performance, standards of conduct, sets of best practices and communities with strong identities and distinctiveness. And in order to achieve this, further study needs to be conducted into the body of knowledge that defines the discipline. In turn, this will then require additional training, testing and certification. In addition, Ulrich & Eichinger (1998) claim that the route to professionalism is through the definition and gaining of competencies. They claim that this has been achieved to a large extent throughout the 1990s in the US already, but that this work should now be taken forward to create a common professional knowledge. These are obviously some of the key issues that this project has been designed to address: what is the body of knowledge, and how can it be disseminated?

However, the definition of 'professional' provided by Gibb (1994) in the UK includes one of the key differentiating elements of professionalism: the need to be qualified in order to practise, in addition to having a specific body of knowledge and an ethical code of conduct. If we consider this definition, the conclusion must be that HR is not a 'profession'. Although there is a perceived need to be qualified in certain countries or more specifically, certain organisations, this is not a statutory requirement in any country as it is for example for people in the medical or accounting professions. For example, we believe that in the USA, organisations are not allowed to state that a personnel qualification is required in job advertisements, as it has not yet been proven to be a requirement related to performance. In fact, only one quarter of senior HR managers in Europe has specific HR qualifications and/or

is a member of their country's professional association<sup>2</sup>, disputing the existence of a community with a strong identity and a need to be certified.

Walker (1988) argues from another perspective that "HR people have got to stop conceptualising their role as a 'professional' individual contributor and realise that their job is to help provide corporations with leadership on HR issues". And likewise, Boyatzis (Yeung 1996) believes that HR practitioners have been trying to create a sense of being a profession since the 1960s. He sees this as a damaging process. He claims that the 'profession' ends up with current, politically popular definitions of quality justifying its existence, and by definition is creating an element of exclusion of anything which diverges from the accepted professional body of knowledge. He argues that in the process of defining this appropriate body of knowledge and the required skills set, the level of performance achieved becomes 'average' or 'mediocre' rather than setting 'superior' performance targets. Likewise in the report on a survey carried out by the Institute of Personnel Management in New Zealand in 1997, it is stated that "it is irrelevant whether HR is a profession: what matters is whether HR practitioners behave in a professional manner" (Pajo & Cleland 1997, pp. 5).

On the one hand there are those commentators who argue that HR as a profession should have its own standards, qualifications and ethics. This would presumably allow HR professionals to refuse to do things that the senior management team of the organisation asked them to, if they went beyond accepted HR standards (in the same way that legal or financial experts might). On the other hand there are those who argue that the effective HR specialist should have the skills to be able to act in the HR arena as necessary to enable the senior management team to fulfil whatever strategic direction they have chosen. At any point the two concepts may be compatible; but there is always confusion in the debate as commentators drift from one usage to the other.

The debate seems to be, in part, between different visions of professionalism. If we are to take the strictest elements of each of the definitions of professionalism presented here, the professionalism of HR can be summarised as requiring:

- a community with a sense of identity;
- an ethical code of conduct;
- common standards of entry and performance;
- a distinct body of knowledge;
- a requirement for training/certification.

Although the extent to which the debate over "professionalism" is a valuable one may be questioned, in the context of this project it is important in order to establish worldwide HR competencies and standards. One means of assessing the extent of HR professionalism is to take a look at evidence of HR practitioners' career paths. The longer individuals choose to remain within a work domain and the more often the senior specialists are drawn from current practitioners, the more that domain can be classed as a profession. Longer service and the restriction of senior positions to those with training and experience imply that the body of knowledge grows, and the sense of identity and distinctiveness increases.

The careers of HR specialists indicate a number of different patterns. In 1999, the average number of years' experience of senior HR practitioners is high (thirteen) across Europe,

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<sup>2</sup> The data are taken from the CRANET survey 1992, the last time this question was asked. The questions in each round of the survey are amended to take into account current activities in the field of HRM (see Appendix 4).

ranging from six years in Denmark to seventeen years in Italy and Sweden. In Europe, over three-quarters of all senior HR managers have been an HR specialist for a minimum of five years. Also, on average six out of ten senior HR managers are recruited from amongst HR specialists (either from internal or external sources) though this figure is lower in for example Finland and Austria (four out of ten).<sup>3</sup> In New Zealand, a similar picture can be found, but it highlights that the phenomenon of HR people having started their career in HR is greatest amongst younger practitioners, indicating a changing trend over time (Pajo & Cleland 1997).

Despite the general trend of prolonged periods of time as HR specialists, and recruitment of HR practitioners being made mainly from those with HR experience, it remains that in Europe more than three in ten senior HR specialists are appointed from outside the profession. The career paths of senior HR specialists are not uniform among countries though. For example, HR specialists in the Philippines tend to come from and move on into different management functions. German, Slovakian, Spanish and UK HR specialists, wanting to stay within HR feel they need general management skills in order to do this (Ackerman et al 1995).

From the various definitions of professionalism in the HR literature, for the purpose of this project we will explore further two of the key factors: a) the body of knowledge; and, b) the requirement for education or training. In the next section we examine the existence of an HR body of knowledge, and particularly the definition of HR competencies in the literature.

### II.3. Definitions of HR competencies

Any analysis of HR competencies requires careful definition because of the considerable variance in the use of the term 'competencies' in the literature. For the purpose of this study, the numerous definitions of competency can be summarised effectively as a collection of technical and cultural capabilities (Brockbank 1997). However, it is obvious throughout the literature that different authors advocate different approaches to competency definition. For example, one particular approach to modelling competencies advocated by Ulrich et al (1995) and Boyatzis (Yeung 1996) includes the integration of areas of competence into groupings.

Ulrich et al's (1995) model combines various aspects of competence into three primary elements: knowledge of the business, HR functional expertise and management of change. They argue that management of change is critical, as the organisation's external rate of change (e.g. globalisation, information flow, customer expectations, technology, etc.) must be matched by the internal rate of change for the organisation to remain competitive. Irrespective of job role or job title, the elements of competence remain in the same order of importance, with any variation manifesting itself in weighting alone. In the US, 'Change management' has been reported to be most important (41%), followed by 'HR functional expertise' (22%) and 'Knowledge of business' (17%). A similar pattern was also seen in non-US organisations, however the different elements were seen as being much more balanced: 34%, 26% and 26% respectively (Ulrich et al 1995, pp.487). The idea that competency weightings change according to job role or level is also supported by Boyatzis (Yeung 1996).

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<sup>3</sup> CRANET survey 1999.

In defining HR competencies, Ulrich and Boyatzis, like many others, argue that it is necessary to consider the specific job roles of HR practitioners in order to differentiate between possible variations in requirements. The roles of human resource staff have been extensively discussed in the literature and in textbooks of human resource management (see, for example, Schuler and Huber, 1993; Purcell, 1995). One work in particular by Tyson and Fell (1986) defined three dominant personnel management models based on an analogy from the building and civil engineering profession: clerk of works, contracts manager and architect. In essence, the clerk of works role focuses on the day-to-day operations carried out by the personnel department, and is often the support or administrative HR practitioner role. The contracts manager is the expert ensuring that every aspect of policy and procedure and hence the personnel department's 'contract' with the organisation is fulfilled. This role equates to that of the professional or specialist HR practitioner. The architect is the long-term designer and planner, co-ordinating the activities of other members of the department, otherwise known as the senior or strategic management HR practitioner. In the definition of these models it is already clear how individuals carrying out different models of personnel management will require different degrees of competence in different areas. This is also relative to the environment in which the organisation is operating.

Traditionally, HR staff have had a relatively limited involvement in the organisation's affairs and goals, with activities being targeted mainly at the operational level. Consequently, the justification of the presence of human resource staff is mainly to enjoy economies of scale and specialisation. However, the HR function is currently having to respond to major changes in its environment: lowering costs, enhancing quality, ensuring that the organisation is tapping into the full potential of its employees and creating stronger business links, hence becoming a business partner. With the growing importance of human resource management to the success of the organisation, human resource departments have become involved at the medium-term level (for example, in the development of recruitment marketing plans) and at the strategic level (for example, a relocation of the organisation). The designated senior 'architects' predominantly perform HR activities at the medium-term and strategic level within the organisation. Clearly, the skills to perform these roles are quite different from those skills needed to perform at the administrative clerk of works level. The challenge for the future for HR appears to lie in sustaining a balance between strategist and technical roles, and shifting from being a provider to being an enabler in personnel management. This includes facilitating change and being an innovator in the face of change and may involve the use of core HR staff whilst outsourcing appropriate activities and devolving responsibilities to the line and to employees themselves (Bell et al 1999).

The HR functions' contribution to organisational performance can be seen from the perspective of the HR practitioner him or herself, and that of the line manager. Many HR activities can be implemented by either human resource management specialists or by line managers provided the individuals have the appropriate levels of competence. On average across Europe, three out of ten organisations have increased responsibilities of the line for HRM.<sup>4</sup> The most common responsibility devolved is for training and development (43% of organisations across Europe), followed by recruitment and selection (35%), pay and benefits (29%), workforce expansion/reduction (28%), with the lowest being industrial relations issues (23%). This information should influence our analysis of future competency needs of HR practitioners.

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<sup>4</sup> CRANET survey 1999.

Concentrating on HR's direct influence on the organisation, Ulrich et al (1995) carried out a large-scale survey in the US looking at specific competencies in HR in order to produce benchmarking standards. One of the recent developments they identified was the emergence of HR 'business partners' resulting in a need for the professional growth of HR practitioners themselves, and the need to contribute to the organisation's competitive stance as a whole. Ulrich et al define competence as the ability to add value to the business; competence must focus on the process leading from changing business conditions to achieving sustainable competitive advantage. This can be done by generating sources of uniqueness and hence developing unique organisational capability. And fundamental to this is ensuring that HR practices are central to the creation and maintenance of this organisational capability.

This section has looked at definitions of competencies and considered the importance of job roles and models of personnel management to competency definition. It has also examined how HR contributes to the organisation as a whole. This raises the issue of how the specific competencies and the process of developing an HR competency model are being identified in the literature.

#### II.4. Developing an HR competency model

Initially, although we note that some of the literature casts doubts on the value of developing prescriptive competency models for HR (see for example Gibb 1994), there is a large body of HR literature that argues the need to develop a competency model. The reasons for this are in order to audit the current skills gap and to provide appropriate development to ensure the function is able to add value. Such a competency model can either be developed based on senior management input (subjective approach) or on a conceptual framework such as functional analysis (objective approach). A number of surveys have already been carried out around the world to try to build such a conceptual framework using both the subjective and objective approaches (Schoonover 1998, Csoka & Hackett 1998, Heneman et al 1998, Laabs 1996, Lawson & Limbrick 1996 and Walker 1988). These also include work done by companies (e.g. UPS, Unilever) and by the personnel management associations in a number of countries around the world. According to these studies, the core HR competencies can be divided into four broad areas: individual style, organisational involvement, leadership and technical activities (see Appendix 5).

Style focuses particularly on personal credibility. Tyson & Fell (1986) define this as resulting from experience across the range of HR competencies, including expertise in the academic disciplines that provide the theoretical basis. Other competencies that develop individual style include interpersonal effectiveness and a relationship orientation. It also includes personal strengths such as tolerance for stress, change and ambiguity as well as being able to adopt creative and analytical approaches to problem solving.

The organisational involvement competencies refer to issues related to business acumen and market orientation. They focus on managing change and culture, having a strategic business perspective and being able to align HR with business and organisational planning processes. The ability to develop a learning organisation also falls under this heading.

The leadership role competencies are more about relationship management, facilitation and building. They focus on the various areas of organisational management such as project, assets, talent and information. Responsiveness to stakeholders is another key competency that

also links back to the organisation awareness competencies. Issues such as quality and value are key words found amongst these competencies.

The technical competencies are perhaps the most familiar in the HR literature. These include the knowledge and delivery of traditional personnel and HR management, for example, reward and compensation, labour relations, training and development, organisational design, staffing and retention, performance management, communication, grievance and discipline. Emerging competencies in this area include the application and exploitation of information technology and compliance with increasingly complex legislation. Likewise, an emphasis is also starting to appear in the literature on skills in evaluating the HR function, on clear objective setting and on HR accountability.

As we have indicated, this study adopts a broad definition of HR competencies, which is most appropriate to our purpose. It includes not only technical competencies in dealing with transactional tasks such as recruitment, retention, release, motivation and development of an organisation's employees, but also includes the strategic skills and knowledge required to deal with the personnel functions' staff and involvement in the organisation as a whole.

The literature is clear in dividing out the technical and the strategic competencies required within HR. In the past, it is argued, the personnel function was about welfare and remuneration, but now it is centred on organisational reaction to changing environments with increases in globalisation and the use of technology and knowledge-based workers. This is affecting the technical competency requirements of personnel practitioners and it is also having an impact on where the personnel function fits into the organisation as a whole. The literature clearly states that personnel should be taking a more strategic role within organisations, and there is research evidence that this is actually taking place. In Europe, the number of organisations with the head of personnel on the top management board (or equivalent) has been around 60% for the last decade. The number of organisations with a written personnel strategy increased on average by 12% during this period.<sup>5</sup> This amounts to clear evidence of the increased strategic approach to HR across Europe, and similar evidence can be seen in literature from the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong.

We have identified that the literature specifies some strategic and technical HR competencies, and indicates that required competencies, or the weighting of required competencies, can vary according to the job role. The next section considers how requirements for competencies vary according to the prevailing organisational context.

## II.5. Variations in HR competency requirements

Throughout the literature it is argued that context influences the required competencies for HR practice. The nature and degree of variation is, however, open to discussion. This section examines the variations in context under the headings of national, organisational and time contexts.

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<sup>5</sup> Trend data from 1992 to 1999 from the CRANET survey.

### II.5.1. National context

Although, there is an increasing shift towards globalisation, and hence arguably towards convergence, in a global project as this is, it is still essential to consider national variations in the definition of HR competencies and professional standards.

Sparrow and Hiltrop (1997) divide the national context into four sets of factors: culture, institutionalisation, business structures/systems, and roles/competence of practitioners. They explain, for example, how organisations face different legal and regulatory systems, depending on the country of residence. These systems vary immensely between countries (see also Brewster & Hegewisch, 1994). Furthermore, differences in economic wealth and labour markets are large between countries.

Legal and regulatory systems, economic wealth, the functioning of labour markets, and culture, all affect requirements of HR competencies. Examples can be easily given. In some countries, the consequences of not abiding by laws on discrimination may have major financial consequences for the organisation (in the United States, for instance). In others, this may not be so significant. In some countries, laws on discrimination are very comprehensive, whereas in other countries these laws are used in fewer areas: in the UK, Italy and in the Netherlands, the use of age restrictions while recruiting is not against the law. As a result, in Italy, about 50% of all advertisements explicitly state age requirements. In the Netherlands, about 20% of all vacancies explicitly use age requirements. In contrast, in the United States, the use of age restrictions is seen as a discriminatory practice. Equally, legislation in Europe is generally stricter than in the US regarding issues of health and safety, working time and employee consultation. Hence, in countries where there are higher legislative demands on the employment of labour, HR employees need to have a more fundamental knowledge of employment law.

Economic wealth may influence the use of HR competencies, since the use of fringe benefits (for example, pensions or healthcare) seems to be more common in wealthy countries. This suggests that in wealthy countries, a higher proportion of HR staff must be specialised in the running of benefit schemes. In addition, rich countries tend to spend more resources on training, so in these countries, more specialised training staff are needed.

National culture affects the use of HR competencies, though since this is an indistinct concept, it is difficult to identify exactly how it does so. For example, it has been claimed that it is useful to focus on national specific differences in the following dimensions: (1) emphasis on quality of life, (2) formalisation and standardisation of work organisation, (3) whether tasks prevail over relationships and (4) the subordinate/boss relationship (Schuler and Rogovsky, 1998). It may be hypothesised, for example, that in societies where formalisation and standardisation of work organisation are more appreciated, HR staff are more likely to work to maintain the status quo. However, in countries where formalisation and standardisation of work is less appreciated, HR staff are seen more as agents of change. Equally, in more consultative societies, HR staff are perhaps more likely to be seen as experts if they can manage the consultation processes effectively. Cultural differences can also be seen, for example, in attitudes and definitions of what makes an effective manager, feedback, power distance and uncertainty avoidance.

National differences in labour markets and the current type of labour market (*eg* many vacancies and a shortage of skills, current levels of unemployment, etc) will affect the

perceived nature of HR competencies. For example, one of the main differences between national labour markets is job turnover. Well-known examples are that in the United States job turnover is high; whereas in Japan, job turnover has traditionally been low compared to European countries. Hence, in the United States, the skills needed to recruit may be more common than in Japan. Similarly, job turnover is usually higher in economies that are booming than those that are in a depression. Cyclical variation in HR competencies is therefore to be expected. Another interesting example is job rotation. In countries where job turnover is relatively low and organisations are not expected to lay off employees, job rotation is more common. Usually, HR departments are responsible for job rotation. Clearly, to make job rotation a success, HR departments should have in-depth knowledge of the organisation and should have the power to overcome the objections of individual line managers. Hence, in countries where job rotation is very common (for example, Japan), HR employees must have the skills (and authority) to organise this.

### II.5.2. Organisational context

Various theories support the notion that similar organisations tend to make use of similar HR competencies. This can be explained by considering how an organisation feels the pressure to conform with the expectations of its stakeholders to introduce business measures of interest to these stakeholders. Since the expectations of these stakeholders tend to be the same for all organisations, similar measures spread throughout the population of organisations. In addition, due to competition, organisations that underperform will be under the threat of takeover or bankruptcy. Thus, due to competition between organisations, beneficial measures spread throughout the population, which is of course reflected in organisations' use of similar HR competencies.

Nevertheless, when the effect of HR activities on the overall performance of the organisation is small, these organisations may, for an extensive period, use less, or more, HR competencies than would be optimal from a maximising-performance principle.

In addition, the expectations of stakeholders with respect to HR competencies may not be well formulated. This can arise, for example, from the absence of benchmark information. Consequently, in countries in which HR activities are more relevant to the performance of the organisation, and in countries where HR activities receive less attention in the media (and hence less benchmark information is available), the variation in the use of HR competencies may be much larger than in other countries.

The organisational context in which an organisation is operating has also been proven to affect the degree to which certain competencies are required. This may depend on the organisation's size, ownership, industry sector, geography or degree of globalisation. For example, an organisation undergoing increased globalisation may be required to focus on increasing workforce commitment, dealing with conflicting local and parent company practices, developing effective global leaders and optimising organisational synergy (Brockbank 1997). These activities may involve the HR practitioners having to acquire new sets of skills and knowledge. However, Ulrich et al (1995) argue that such factors have little overall influence on the fundamental elements of competency required.

Another aspect of the organisational context is that of potential outsourcing of HR activities. Although most large organisations have a human resource department that performs

transactional HR activities, operational activities do not have to be performed necessarily within the hierarchy of the organisation: they can be outsourced to the market.

It is interesting to observe that in the literature on HR competencies, most empirical studies focus on HR departments in (large) organisations, and not on specialist agencies providing HR services. Since in some countries outsourcing of HR activities has become important, and in other countries it is growing quickly, there is currently a large gap in the literature. The demand for HR competencies in organisations with HR departments is quite different from the demand for HR competencies in agencies that specialise in HR activities.

One of the most fundamental decisions of an organisation is to decide whether to make a product or to buy it in the market, i.e. outsource it. Organisations tend to buy the product from the market when the product is standardised and this market is developed. Technical HR competencies are relatively standard. As a result, recruitment, wage administration and general training skills can be outsourced to the market. In general, organisations specialising in recruitment, wage administration or general training will be able to offer these activities at lower costs than if organisations organise these HR activities in-house.

In countries where the markets for HR activities are more developed, it is unlikely that organisations will report difficulties in acquiring employees with technical HR competencies because technical HR activities are more likely to be outsourced. Similarly, in these countries, HR employees (working for organisations that do not specialise in HR) are more likely to concentrate on HR activities that are more firm-specific or that require knowledge of a combination of HR activities. The extent to which outsourcing is prevalent in a country is therefore of importance when considering the skills and knowledge required by practitioners working in HR departments or those working in specialised agencies.

### II.5.3. Time context

The primary comment regarding the change in competency requirements over time, particularly in the US, Australian and UK literature is the increasing importance of business knowledge, and in particular, financial management. This appears to be acquiring a particular interest in organisations, especially where senior-level HR practitioners have a place on the main board of management.

Equally, as time progresses, so certain management techniques and processes come in and out of fashion: changing the focus of HR practices. For example, the relatively recent phenomenon of outsourcing described above demands new technical competencies. In another example, in the 1980s business skills and knowledge of the work environment were already important factors in the effectiveness of HR Trainer/Developer roles in the UK. This was starting to appear increasingly in US literature on the topic, but had not pervaded Australian literature at all at this stage (Moy 1991).

Other causes of variation in HR competencies depend on such things as the level of decentralisation, strategic integration and HR careers and professional allegiance (Ackerman et al 1995), all of which can be analysed within national, organisational and time contexts. However, these and other variations in HR competency requirements are all predicated by the fundamental purpose of the HR function, which is seen as being to contribute to the success of the organisation as a whole.

## II.6. Competency acquisition

Having established details of the broad body of knowledge regarding HR practices from which a competency model can be developed, it is important to consider how the transfer of skills and knowledge to HR practitioners can take place to ensure added value in the organisation. It is also important to establish to what extent this body of knowledge is tested and certified, and has become a requirement in the working environment.

Considering first the education levels of senior HR practitioners across Europe, almost three-quarters of senior HR practitioners have an academic degree.<sup>6</sup> However, there is a large difference in the proportion that have a university first degree between countries, ranging from four out of ten in the Netherlands to over nine out of ten in Turkey, Spain, France and Bulgaria. It is important to consider the influence of the national context and particularly the national education system when considering statistics such as these. For example, France is well known for its requirement on people to have achieved as highly as possible in educational terms before starting their career in whatever occupation. The percentage of senior HR managers in France with a degree is thus correspondingly high (91%).

We discussed earlier the emerging requirement for HR practitioners to adopt business knowledge, and correspondingly, in the 1990s, the academic disciplines of senior HR managers across Europe reflect this emphasis on the business studies and economics areas of study. The divisions amongst disciplines of study are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Academic disciplines of senior HR managers (%)**

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1999</b>
Business studies/economics	34	40	37
Social sciences	19	20	21
Humanities/arts	11	9	9
Law	14	12	13
Engineering	8	8	9
Natural Sciences	4	3	3
Other	10	8	8

Source: CRANET (1992, 1995, 1999)

There are also different patterns in educational profiles of senior HR specialists between certain European countries. For example, in Spain a degree in law is more common, whereas degrees in social sciences are more common in Sweden and arts/humanities in the UK (Tyson & Wikander 1994). Again this is an example of how national context can have an impact on HR specialist training and education that cannot be ignored in a study of this nature. Any Europe-wide educational programme has to be sufficiently flexible to take into account different educational systems, to meet specific country needs and to prepare managers to work at the strategic level. Taking the argument on a worldwide scale inevitably exaggerates this point.

With regard to job-related training, there is a great deal of consensus across Europe regarding the method of training received by senior HR practitioners from their employer for their

<sup>6</sup> CRANET survey 1999.

personnel management role. In Europe, short courses and seminars are the most popular method with an average of eight out of ten respondents having received training via this route (the highest being Norway with 95%, and the lowest Portugal with only 50%). Job-related projects was second most popular at around half (highest Austria 84%, lowest France 22%), then job rotation for three out of ten practitioners (highest Turkey 39%, lowest Portugal 10%), formal coaching for two out of ten (highest Denmark 34%, lowest Czech Republic 4%) and the least popular being formal mentoring, available to only one in ten (highest Greece 37%, lowest Czech Republic 3%).<sup>7</sup> As the figures in brackets show however, country variations are highly significant. Although we can see that much training is done off-the-job via short courses and seminars, there is still a very significant proportion taking place on-the-job (e.g. job-related projects, job rotation, coaching and mentoring).

An earlier section identified the distinction between different models of personnel management: clerk of works, contracts manager and architect (Tyson and Fell, 1986) and how this relates to strategic and technical competencies. Amongst the strategic HR competencies required by the architect role are the skills necessary to integrate human resource management with the overall business strategy. For example, a strategic HR skill is to know which types of contracts are offered to employees (permanent contracts or temporary contracts), or whether the organisation should offer more or less training to its employees. Strategic HR competencies are by definition more difficult to acquire since they are less theoretical and require more on-the-job experience. In addition, strategic HR competencies are especially valuable if accompanied by an in-depth knowledge of the organisation. This makes strategic HR competencies more idiosyncratic than technical HR competencies that are presumably easier to transfer to other organisations.

In a number of countries, technical HR competencies are nowadays relatively easy to acquire, although this was not necessarily the case a number of decades ago. For example, in the United States, most organisations are able to hire employees with the required skills to recruit. However, in these countries, strategic HR competencies are still scarce. Hence, it is not surprising that empirical studies have shown that organisations in the United States emphasise the importance of strategic HR competencies and not those of technical HR competencies. Nevertheless, in other countries, the 'markets' for technical HR competencies may be less developed. In these countries, organisations can still attempt to obtain a (short-lived) competitive advantage by improving the technical HR competencies, whereas the strategic HR competencies will receive less attention. Since technical HR competencies are easier to acquire, it makes sense for organisations to focus first on technical HR competencies before focusing on strategic HR competencies. For the same reasons, in countries where technical HR competencies cannot be used any more to obtain a competitive advantage, on-the-job experience will be emphasised as being desirable. Whereas in countries where technical HR competencies can still give additional value compared to competitors, these competencies will still be relatively more valuable.

However, very little appears to be available within the HR competencies' literature to show how practitioners should aim to enhance their skill and knowledge levels. Most journal articles are content to list the required competencies for the future and suggest practitioners act on the gap they see between their own skills and what is required (for the exceptions, see Yeung et al 1996 and Yeung 1996). Later in this report, we explore some of the ways in which Associations are addressing this need.

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<sup>7</sup> CRANET survey 1992 – the last time this question was asked.

## II.7. Summary

In this chapter we have looked at the substantial contribution that the existing literature can make to this worldwide HR competencies and professional standards project. We have studied the debate on the 'professionalism' of HR, identifying opinions varying from the positive to the negative. Some of the concerns here were addressed in part by identifying the value of substantial experience within the HR function held by those in senior HR positions, however this did not appear to be backed up by a requirement for an equivalent level of formal qualifications.

We provided our own definition of competencies for the purpose of this document, encapsulating both technical and strategic competencies, and went further to discuss the clustering of competencies advocated by certain authors. The idea that core competencies do not necessarily vary in nature but rather in weighting was also discussed in the context of different job roles and models of personnel management. The issue of outsourcing certain HR activities was also raised as one that will affect the skill requirements within an organisation, and of individual practitioners whether they are working in an HR function or a specialised agency.

The potential conflicts that may arise when developing a competency model were mentioned, however, the overwhelming position of HR literature is that there is a need for a competency model in order to make progress in developing the HR function further. A summary was provided of the common key competencies being identified throughout the literature and variations in these core competencies were discussed based on three important contexts: national, organisational and time.

The underlying purpose of HR was clarified as adding value to the organisation, which could be achieved via two routes: one through line management or external contractors carrying out HR activities, and the other through HR practitioners themselves. Competency was identified as one of the key enabling factors for an organisation to create its own sustainable competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Finally we discussed how HR practitioners could go about improving their own personal levels of competence. We looked at existing education and training levels globally, and the different methodologies suggested for overcoming competency gaps. In the following chapters, we will provide an analysis of the survey data that we collected from around the world, bearing in mind the findings from this literature review.

### **III. Methodology**

In addition to the literature review, the project included carrying out three separate but related surveys. These included a major worldwide survey of personnel management associations, a second follow-up survey at a conference in the USA, and a worldwide survey among academics in the field of human resource management. The methodology of these surveys is detailed in the following sections.

Out of the 53 countries contacted, 28 responded by either returning a personnel management association questionnaire, and/or returning an academic literature questionnaire (see Figure 1). This gives an overall response rate of 53%.

**Figure 1. World map showing the total spread of responses received from countries which were members of the WFPMA at the time of the project**



#### **III.1 The survey of personnel management associations**

We chose to use a postal survey that consists of four sections. The first section deals with the nature of the personnel management associations (for example, the composition of the membership). The second section deals with education and training (for example, types of training courses). The third section includes questions on skills and knowledge (for example, which levels of personnel practitioners are responsible for which tasks). The last section covers the personal details of the respondents.

The responsibility for the design of the survey was shared by a large number of academics and practitioners knowledgeable in the field of (international) human resource management. Professor Chris Brewster, Dr Jos van Ommeren and Elaine Farndale (Cranfield School of Management, the United Kingdom) have taken the first and primary responsibility for the design of the questionnaire in close collaboration with Judy Whittaker (CIPD, United Kingdom). Based on the first design of the questionnaire, the members of the steering group

indicated improvements. The amended version of the questionnaire was mailed again to all the members of the steering group and the comments were incorporated into the final version. After the questionnaire had been designed in English, it was translated into Spanish.

A total of 70 questionnaires were posted on 5 January 1999 to 51 countries all over the world, primarily to the head of the national personnel management associations (see Appendix 2). The CIPD administered the mailing lists and posted out the questionnaires. After the initial closing date for receipt of completed questionnaires, members of the research team at the Cranfield School of Management attempted to increase the response by telephone, fax and email. A total of 23 completed questionnaires were received from the following 22 countries: Argentina (RA), Brazil (BR), Canada (CA), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Hong Kong (HK), Hungary (HU), India (IN), Japan (JP), Malaysia (MY), Mexico (MX), the Netherlands (NL), New Zealand (NZ), Norway (NO), Portugal (PT), South Africa (ZA), Spain (ES), Sweden (SE), Thailand (TH), United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (US) and Venezuela (VE). The final date for receipt of completed questionnaires was 31 May 1999.

**Figure 2. World map showing the spread of personnel management questionnaires received**



The response rate achieved from the WFPMA member associations was 31%, covering 41% of the countries contacted. The spread of responses from personnel management associations around the world is good (see Figure 2). Hence, we may presume that our sample of personnel management associations is reasonably representative for personnel management associations around the world.

In some countries, the personnel management associations are mainly divided according to region. In particular, from Spain, we received responses from six different regional personnel management associations. When these regional personnel management associations indicated differences in their responses, we generally assumed the answers of the majority of respondents to be representative for Spain as a whole.

We received two questionnaires from Brazil. This enabled us to examine the reliability of the answers of the respondents. It is well known that respondents who are both very familiar with a certain topic, may still disagree how to respond to questions asked. It appears that the respondents from Brazil agree to a large extent about the answers to the questions in our questionnaire. Hence, the country-specific variation in answers due to idiosyncratic answers of respondents is limited. For this reason, only one of the two questionnaires received from Brazil has been included in the data analysis, so as to maintain even weighting from each of the countries.

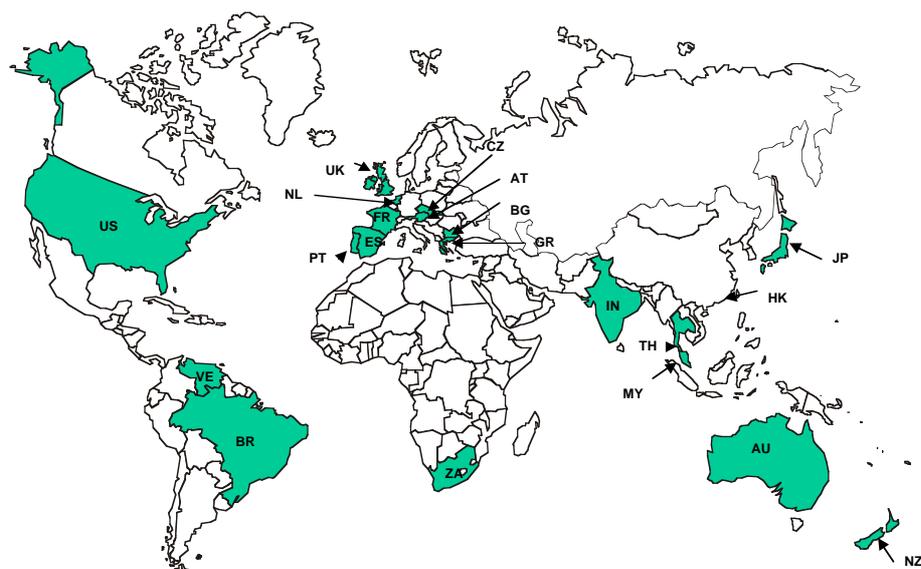
### III.2 Second survey in USA

A further 10 shortened questionnaires were circulated amongst participants at a presentation of the project at a conference in Orlando, USA in April 1999. The questions posed are limited to those on education and training, which levels of personnel practitioners are responsible for which tasks, and the personal details of the respondents. The results of these questionnaires were checked against the SHRM response from the USA, and provided additional information on whether the effects of idiosyncratic answers of respondents are limited. To a large extent the results of this survey reinforced the data provided by the USA.

### III.3 The academic literature survey

A total of 48 academic literature questionnaires were sent out to 27 countries worldwide (see Appendix 2), and all 70 recipients of the main survey were asked to pass on an academic literature questionnaire to a suitable academic representative in their country. We received 23 responses from a total of 20 countries (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3. World map showing the spread of academic literature questionnaires received**



## **IV. Survey findings**

This chapter reports the data collected from the questionnaires received, and is divided into sections corresponding with the sections found in the questionnaire. A full account of all the response data can be found in Appendix 1. The figures that follow are based on 22 responses from WFPMA associations all in different countries.<sup>8</sup>

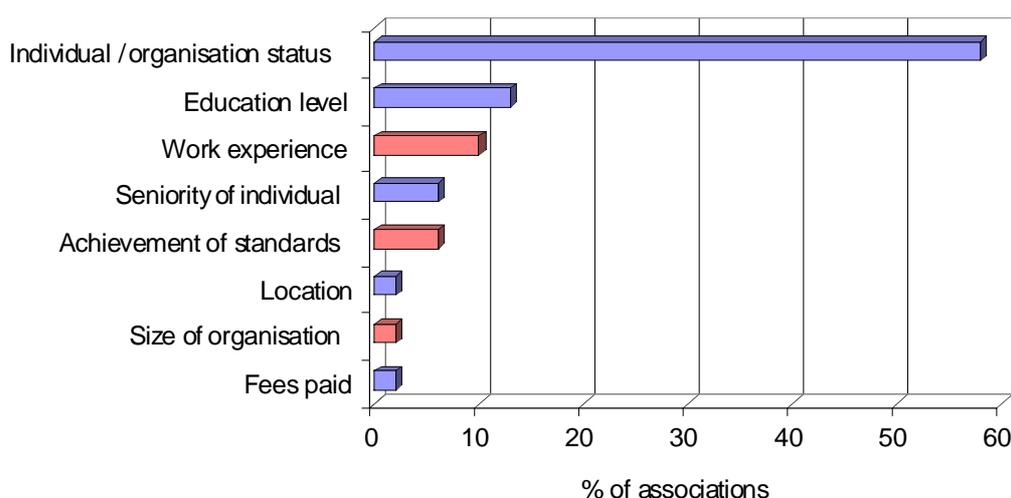
### **IV.1 Background information on personnel management associations**

The majority of associations have a combination of individual and organisational categories of membership (62%), with only two countries out of the 22 limiting membership to organisations (Mexico and Hungary). The response received from Canada was from the Canadian Council of Human Resource Associations (CCHRA), which is an association of associations representing most HR-related functional area associations within Canada. The Spanish response was also representative of six regional associations in Spain.

Membership of associations is restricted in the minority of cases. These restrictions are related to an individual's job experience (39 per cent), country of residence (20 per cent), education level (18 per cent) or language/region (six per cent). For corporate membership, restrictions are placed in relation to location (country - 14 per cent; region - seven per cent). Individual and corporate membership are not limited according to economic sector in any of the respondent countries.

A large majority (73 per cent) of associations divides membership into different categories. On average, there are five categories of membership, based primarily on individual/organisation status, education levels and work experience (see Figure 4).

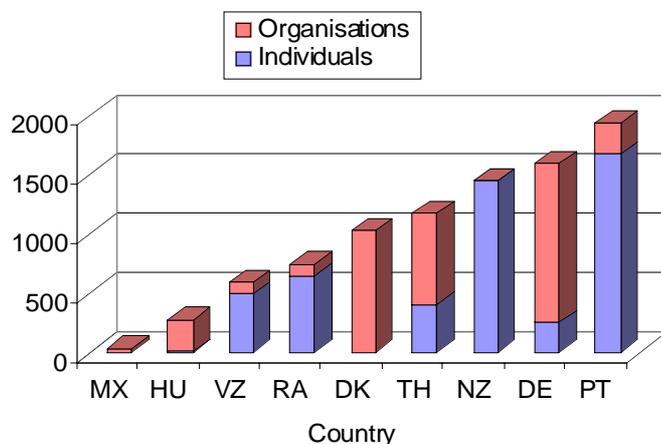
**Figure 4. Criteria for categories of membership**



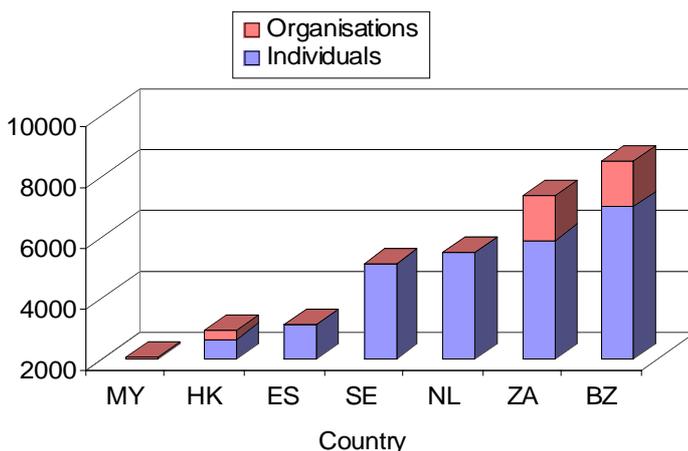
<sup>8</sup> When the term 'average' is used in this section, this refers to the median of the set of data, rather than the mean so as to eliminate the effects of the extremes of the responses.

In a project of this nature, the size of the associations obviously varies greatly from country to country. For example, the number of members of the associations in each country varies from 34 organisations to 114,000 individuals (see Figures 5a, b and c).

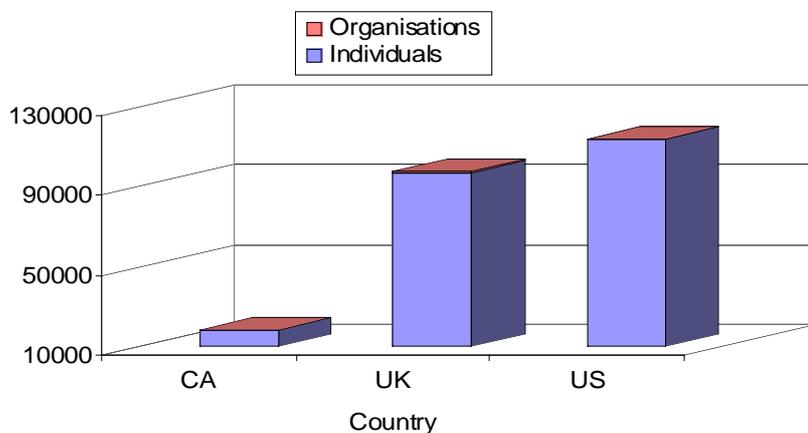
**Figure 5a. Number of members - associations with less than 2000 members in total**



**Figure 5b. Number of members - associations with between 2000 and 10000 members in total**

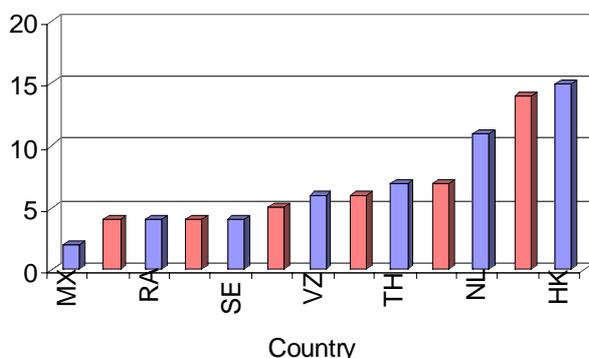


**Figure 5c. Number of members - associations with more than 10000 members in total**

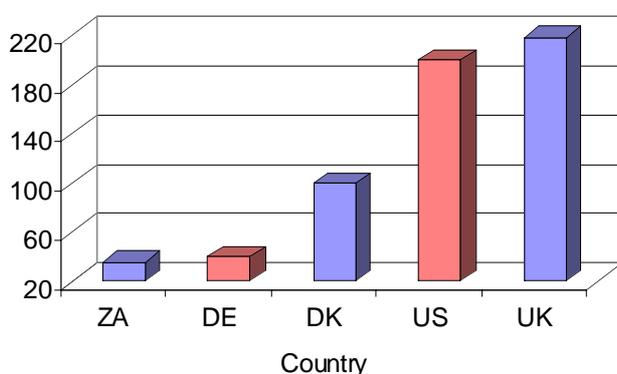


The number of paid employees averages at nine, comprising seven full-time and two part-time staff. Canada is the only Association without paid employees. The number of paid employees in each country can be seen in Figures 6a and b.

**Figure 6a. Number of paid employees - associations with less than 20 employees in total**



**Figure 6b. Number of paid employees - associations with more than 20 employees in total**



Most countries have more than one association representing the interests of personnel practitioners (59 per cent). The majority of these focus either specifically on training and development or on general personnel management and training and development issues. Around one quarter of these other organisations are specific to a particular function of personnel management, such as employee relations or employee reward.

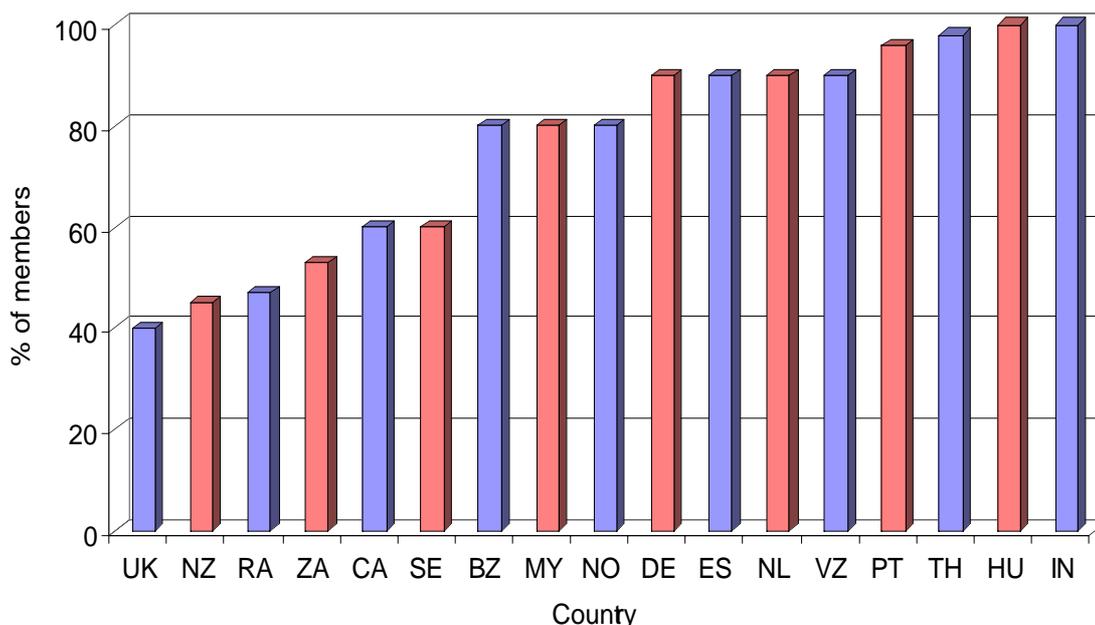
Of the responses received, an average profile of the person who took responsibility for completing the questionnaire can be established. This would be the head of the Association, or another senior manager. The average length of time spent working for the Association is six years and the average length of time working in personnel management is over twenty years. The respondent would have a higher education degree, most likely in social or behavioural sciences (32 per cent) or business studies (23 per cent).

## IV.2 Education and training

This section reports on both the level of achievement of associations' members, and on the education and training activities of each association.

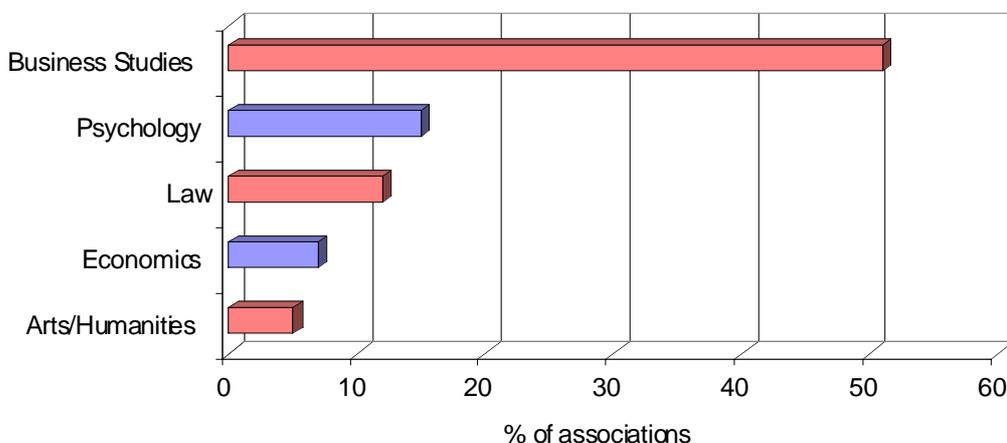
Across all of the countries, a very large majority of members is qualified to university degree level (85 per cent). The spread between countries is shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 7. Members with a university degree**



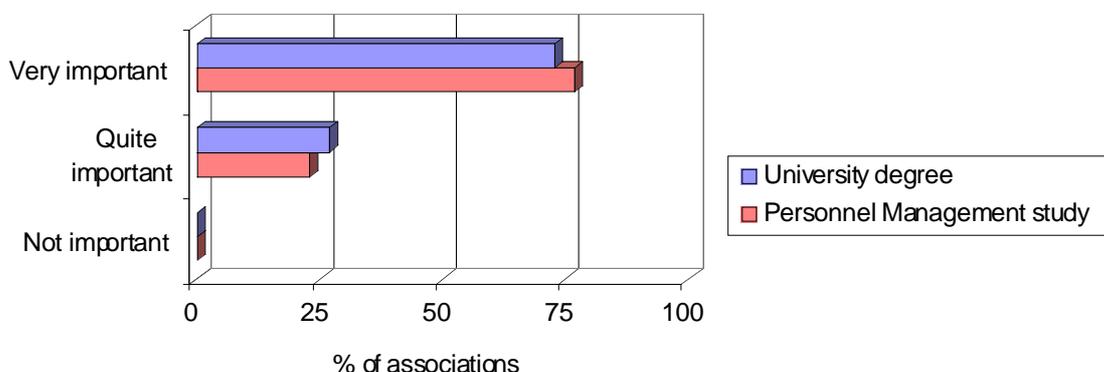
Amongst these degrees, business studies was the most popular discipline for personnel management association members, followed by psychology and then law (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Most common degree disciplines among personnel management association members**



Almost all (96 per cent) of respondents believe that personnel management practitioners in their country were more likely to have a degree now than ten years ago. Three-quarters believe it is very important to have a university degree to practise personnel management, with the remainder seeing this as quite important. Very similar opinions are held with regard to the need to follow a course of study in personnel management (see Figure 9).

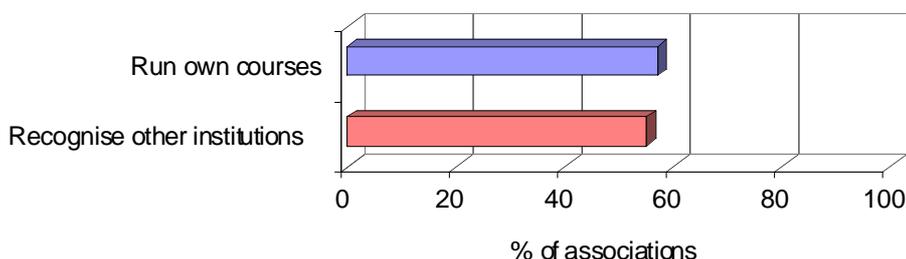
**Figure 9. The importance of education levels**



This data shows an apparent rise in the importance of gaining a personnel management qualification, compared with the findings of the Cranet survey in 1992 reported in section II.2. In 1992, only a quarter of senior HR managers had specific HR qualifications.

Over half of all the associations who responded run professional personnel management certified courses of study (see Figure 10) and/or recognise those run by other institutions. Those who run their own courses are based in Argentina, Brazil, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Thailand, United Kingdom and South Africa. In addition, Norway recognises courses but does not run them. In general, these courses are well established, with the average length of time that a course has been in existence being 20 years.

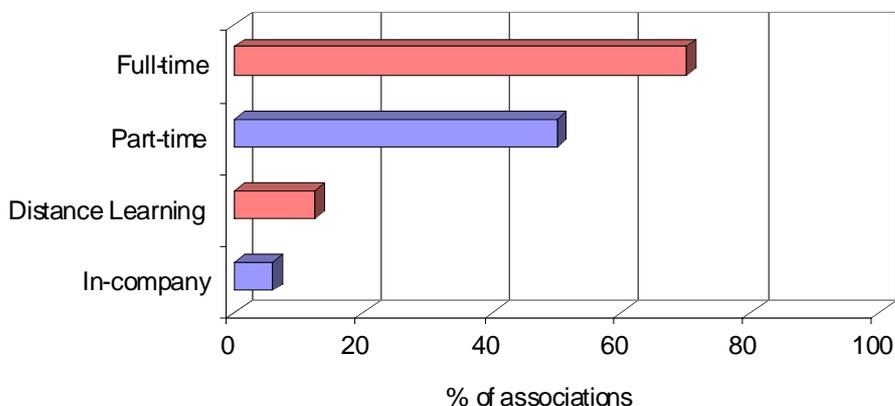
**Figure 10. Associations who run personnel management certified courses of study**



Of these courses, over half differentiate between levels of competence. The average time taken to complete a certified course of study at elementary level is 114 hours, and at advanced level 216 hours. The total time taken to complete a certified course of study with no differentiation between levels is 292 hours, the longest courses taking up to three years.

There is also much use made of different modes of study. Almost three-quarters of the associations who responded offer different modes of study to their students, with the full-time option being the most popular (see Figure 11).

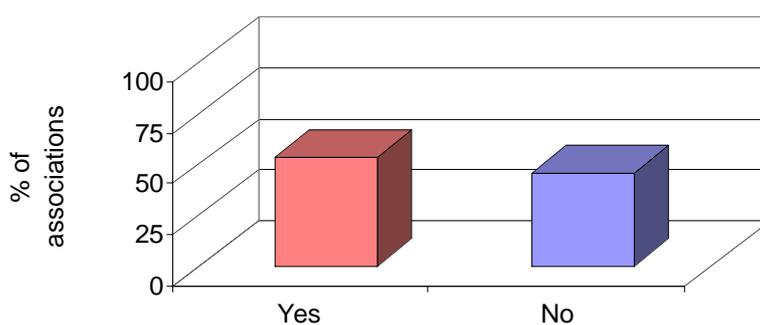
**Figure 11. Modes of study**



On average, 175 individuals pass the certified course of study each year. An average of 4,200 individuals currently holds the course certificate per association. All who follow the certified courses of study are formally examined.

In addition to certified courses of study with formal examination, there are also other means of recognising competence in the field of personnel management. Over half of all respondents have a mechanism for awarding certificates for demonstrating competence in the field of professional personnel management rather than students having to sit an examination (see Figure 12).

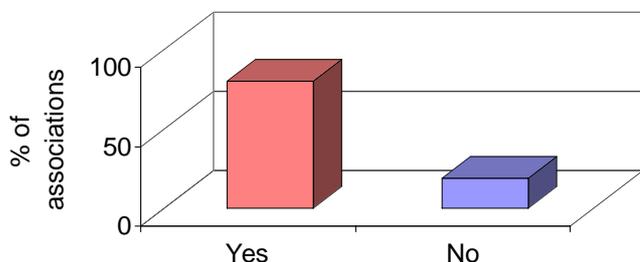
**Figure 12. Do you award certificates for demonstrating competence?**



A small minority of institutions, eight per cent, requires practitioners to undergo re-certification. There is a significant usage of continuing professional development requirements, being operated by over half of all associations (54 per cent). On average, 200 members gain some form of personnel management certificate each year. Approximately 111,500 association members from 22 countries currently hold their association’s professional personnel management certificate.

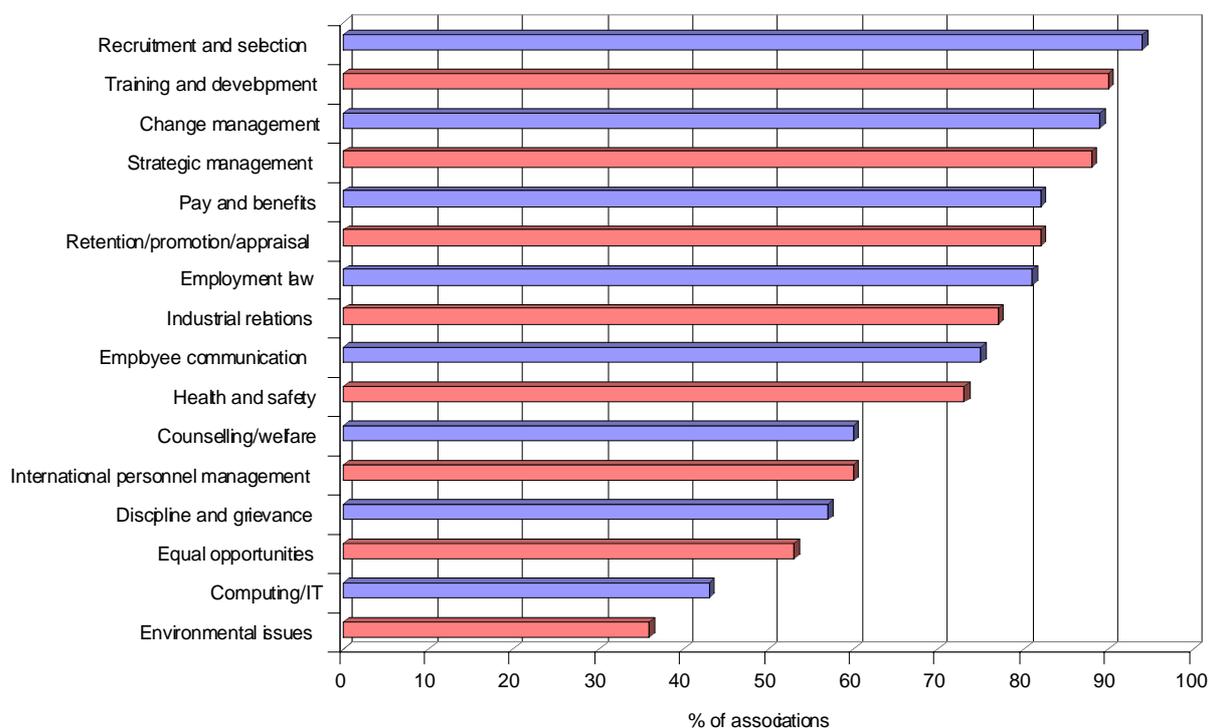
In addition to formal courses of study, most associations offer training courses to both members and non-members (see Figure 13). Few licence other institutions to run training courses (six per cent), but over half also recognise training courses offered by other institutions.

**Figure 13. Do you offer training courses?**

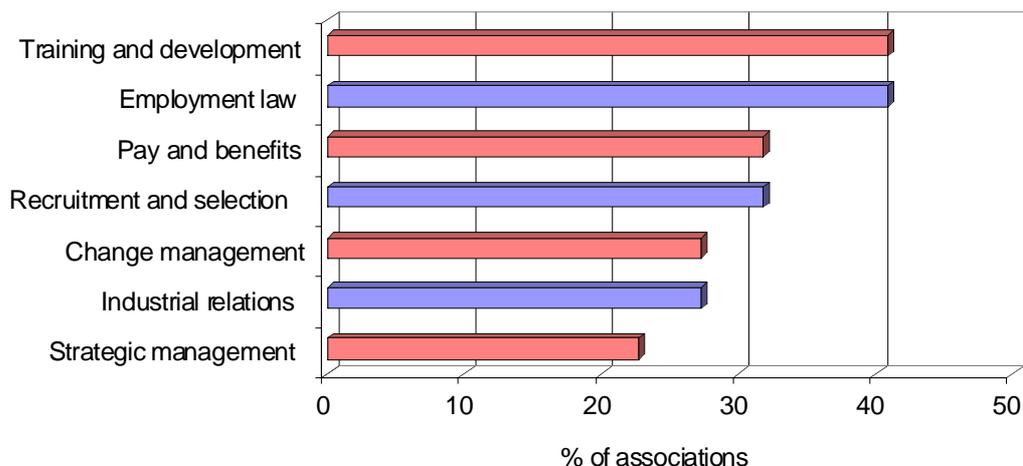


Approximately an average of 550 individuals per association (a total of over 51,000 individuals a year in 22 countries) participates in training and development courses and programmes offered. The training courses offered cover the whole spectrum of personnel management issues throughout most countries (see Figure 14).

**Figure 14. Training courses offered**



When asked to identify the most popular courses from all those offered, similar responses were received from across the world. The data is summarised in Figure 15.

**Figure 15. Most popular training courses**

As we stated above, because we are working with data from across the world, it is sometimes difficult to group findings and activities as averages and percentages as each association has its own ways of operating. The figures and charts above summarise some of the key findings, however it is important to remember the significant circumstances in some countries.

In Canada activities are carried out at regional level, so no data has been collected regarding certified course of study at national level. Some of the provincial and national member organisations do provide seminars and upgrading courses to meet re-certification requirements, etc. CCHRA is developing national standards and assessment processes to assist its member associations in this. The focus is being placed on an individual's competence irrespective of whether this has been gained from education or experience.

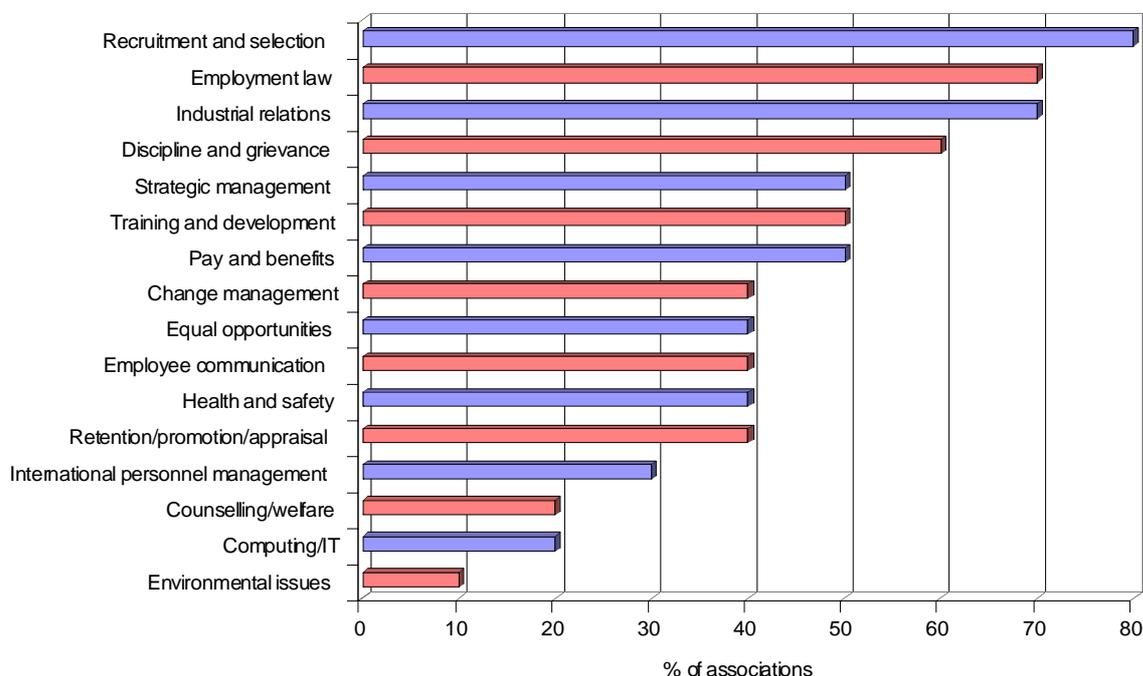
In Germany a lot of informal training and development takes place in their experience exchange groups and networks, which has not been recorded in the data above.

In New Zealand certification is not achieved via an education route, but is awarded based on an application form considered by a panel. A similar system was in place in the USA between 1976 and 1988, before the certification preparation course was introduced. Also, in the USA, a person does not need to be an association member in order to be certified.

### IV.3 Skills and knowledge

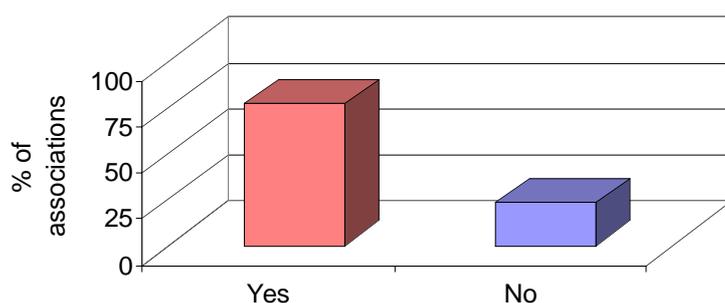
In this section we focus on the actual skills and knowledge required by personnel practitioners according to the personnel management associations. About half of the associations define or publish guidelines on the skills and knowledge required for personnel management activities and responsibilities (53 per cent). Like the range of training courses offered by associations, these guidelines cover all personnel management activities, with recruitment and selection being quoted by the most associations (see Figure 16). The fact that many areas of personnel management are covered by guidelines in fewer than half of the associations surveyed may indicate a gap in the setting of standards in some countries.

**Figure 16. Range of association guidelines produced**



In addition to the guidelines on skills and knowledge, over three-quarters of associations produce formal guidelines on a code of conduct for personnel management practitioners (see Figure 17). A quarter of associations impose penalties for members failing to abide with any of these guidelines.

**Figure 17. Do you produce a code of conduct?**



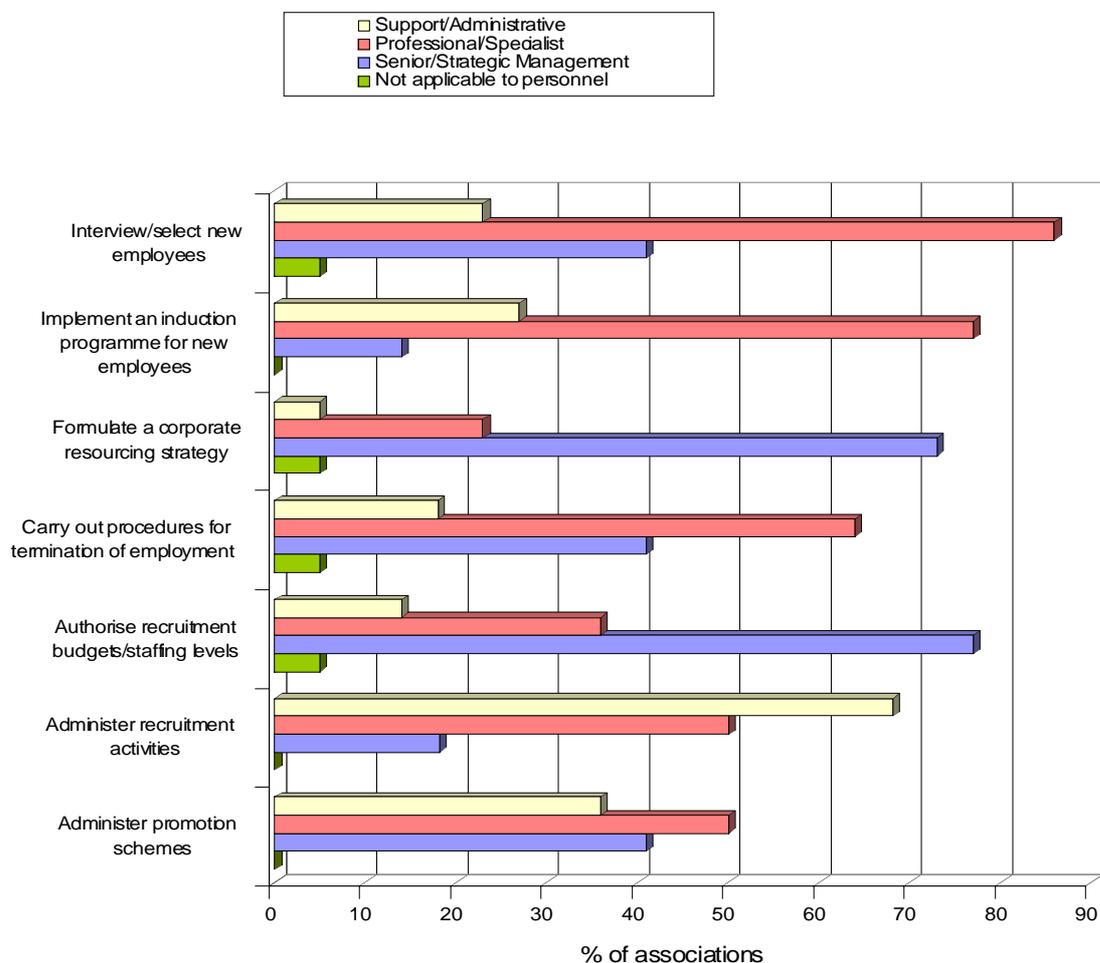
The information represented in figures 14, 16 and 17 are evidence of the existence of a body of knowledge and codes of conduct, which are important findings in terms of establishing the professionalism of HR. One of the issues raised in Chapter II was that HR as a profession should have its own standards, qualifications and ethics, as this is important in order to establish worldwide HR competencies and standards.

The questions regarding what levels of personnel practitioner carry out which activities produced a wide range of responses. One association in Denmark found that it was

impossible to differentiate tasks between the levels as presented in the questionnaire due to the nature of the personnel practitioners' role in that country. Others stated that the responsibilities depend largely on the size of the organisation. However, there was a large degree of consensus between the responses as presented below.

Recruitment, retention, promotion and termination activities are carried out at the three levels of HR practitioners: support/administrative, professional/specialist and senior/strategic management (see Figure 18). Support/administrative staff are mainly responsible for administering recruitment activities, followed by administering promotion schemes and implementing induction programmes for new employees. Professional/specialist staff are responsible primarily for interviewing and selecting new employees, implement induction programmes for new employees and carrying out procedures for termination of employment. The key responsibility at senior/strategic management level is authorising recruitment budgets and staffing levels, followed by formulating a corporate resourcing strategy.

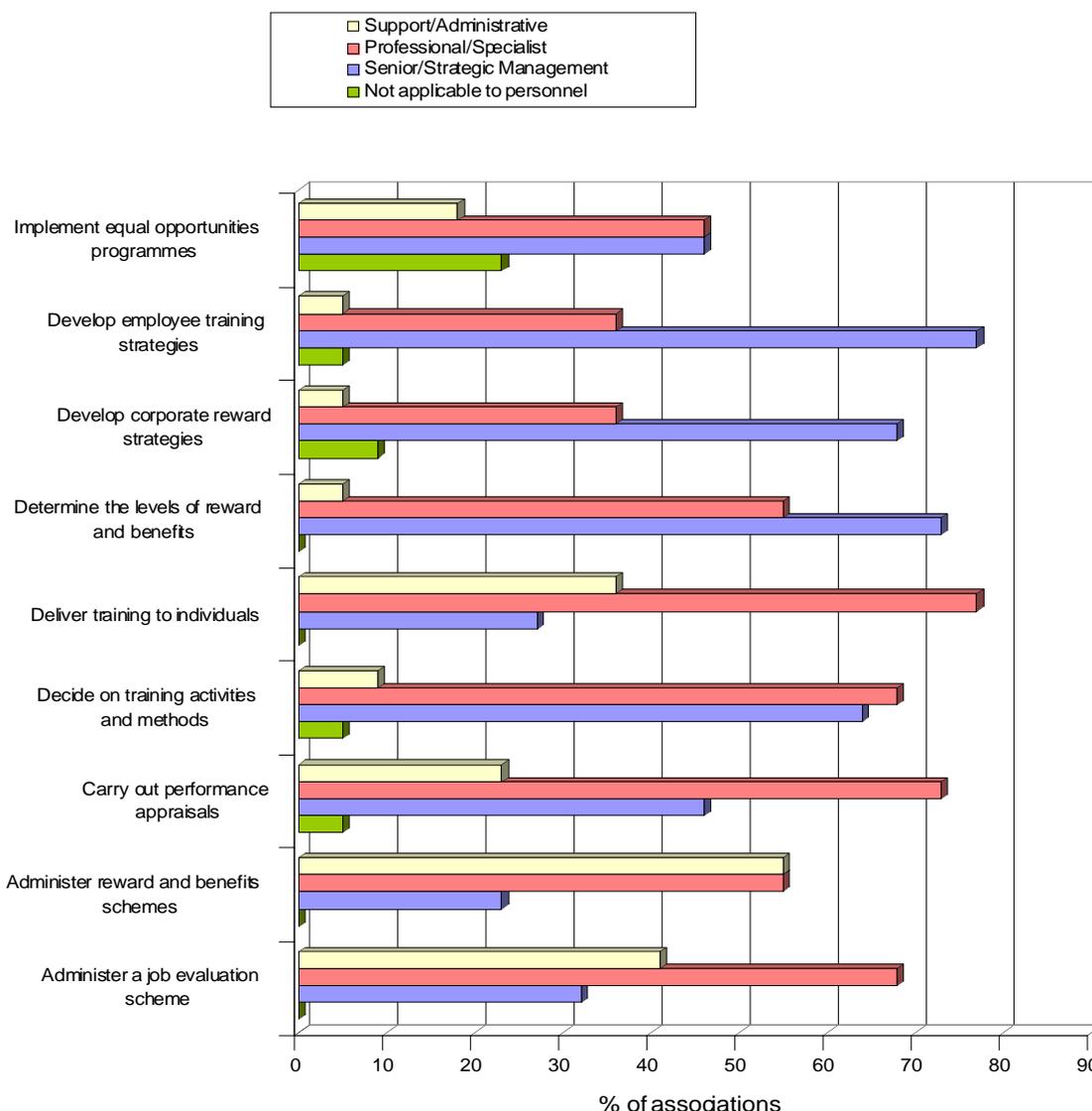
**Figure 18. Recruitment, retention, promotion and termination**



Performance measurement, reward and development activities are also divided amongst the three practitioner levels (see Figure 19). Support/administrative and professional/specialist staff take equal responsibility for administering reward and benefits schemes.

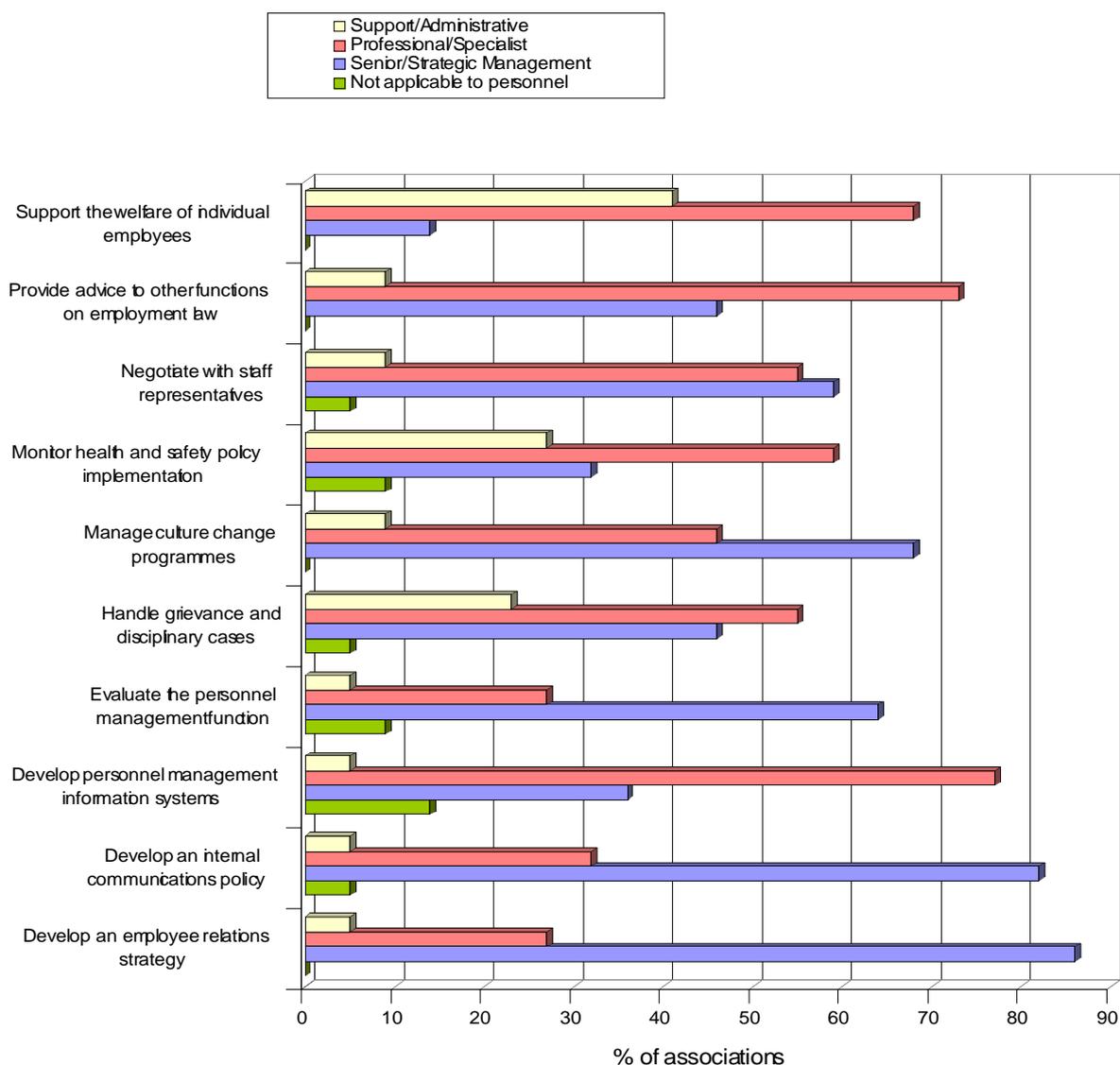
Professional/specialist staff are also responsible for delivering training, carrying out performance appraisals, deciding on training activities and methods and administering job evaluation schemes. Senior/strategic management staff develop employee training strategies, determine the levels of reward and benefits and develop corporate reward strategies.

**Figure 19. Performance measurement, reward and development**



The third category covers the areas of employee communication and the working environment (see Figure 20). Aside from supporting the welfare of individuals, support/administrative level practitioners were not seen as responsible for many of these activities. Professional/specialist level practitioners are mainly responsible for developing information systems, providing advice to other functions on employment law and supporting the welfare of individual employees. Senior/strategic management level staff responsibilities include developing an employee relations strategy, developing an internal communications policy and managing culture change programmes.

**Figure 20. Employee communication and the working environment**



A number of activities were expressed as not being applicable to the personnel management function by one or more countries (see Figures 18, 19 and 20). These include implementing equal opportunities programmes (23 per cent), developing personnel management information systems (fourteen per cent), evaluating the personnel management function (nine per cent), monitoring health and safety policy implementation (nine per cent) and developing corporate reward strategies (nine per cent). These percentages show that very few of the activities listed are actually seen as irrelevant to the personnel function. This would indicate that although the literature refers to many HR activities being devolved to line management in organisations, in practice, this is not very common.

If we compare these findings to the job roles identified in the literature, we can see a large degree of correlation with the findings of previous studies. In particular, the studies carried out by Tyson and Fell (1986) which identified three HR roles (clerk of works, contracts manager and architect), can be compared to the findings of this survey. The clerk of works role, which focuses on the day-to-day operations carried out by the personnel department, is the support or administrative HR practitioner role. The contracts manager role which is the

expert ensuring that every aspect of policy and procedure, is the professional or specialist HR practitioner role. The architect role, which is that of the long-term designer and planner, coordinating the activities of other members of the department, is the senior or strategic management HR practitioner role.

Taking this analysis further, the division of activities between different levels of personnel practitioner around the world, shows the professional/specialist level of practitioner as primarily responsible for the technical activities, whilst the senior level is focusing more on the strategic management activities. This raises the issue of whether this division is necessary and/or desirable, and whether the focus of personnel management activities is shifting towards strategic activities as is often advocated in the literature. Clearly, the skills to perform these roles are quite different. As we noted earlier, the challenge for the future for HR appears to lie in sustaining an appropriate balance between strategist and technical roles in the face of a changing environment. The fact that very few activities were seen as outside of the scope of the personnel function, indicates that there may be less devolution of activities to line management than the literature promotes.

#### **IV.4 Academic questionnaires**

In this section, we summarise the data collected from the academic questionnaires that we received. The primary aim of this questionnaire had been to gather information for the literature review, but it also revealed interesting insights into the terminology used and particular topics of interest. The responses have been divided into English and Non-English language, as the literature review focused on English language texts. A full account of all the response data can be found in Appendix 3.

##### **IV.4.1 English language responses**

The terms human resources, human resource management or HRM are cited in 60% of all the core textbooks cited by 14 respondents. Although it has been said that in some countries, particularly the UK, organisations are not all embracing the new terminology of HRM, there is an obvious focus in the recent literature on HRM rather than ‘personnel management’ (13% of texts used this latter terminology). The core texts also show that there is no single dimension of personnel management which is dominating teaching - specific texts on strategy, industrial relations and employment law still hold minority proportions in this field of study (9%, 9% and 2% respectively). Interestingly, Thailand and South Africa cited the same core personnel management textbooks as the USA, which gives an indication of the degree of influence of the US model of HRM in these countries.

##### **IV.4.2 Non-English language responses**

The questionnaires of the 10 respondents who provided non-English language academic literature references, reflect those of the English language references: 57% of titles included the words ‘human resources’ or ‘human resource management’. The figure for ‘personnel management’ was considerably higher than the English language responses at 39%. However, whether this is an indication of a stronger focus on personnel management in these countries, or whether this is merely a linguistic phenomena, would need further investigation. We can see again that it is predominantly generalist texts that are being cited rather than those on specialist HR topics.

## **V. The HR body of knowledge**

### **V.1 Introduction**

In this chapter we focus on the standards that support the many personnel management practices which are in operation around the globe today. We lay out what practitioners are expected to know and to be able to do in order to operate at a support, professional or strategic level in the management and development of people.

Firstly, we clarify what we mean by a framework of knowledge and skills. A framework is then presented which prescribes the areas of professional knowledge and skills that could be used in setting the criteria by which an association assesses the suitability of individuals for professional membership or achievement of professional qualifications. It goes beyond the boundaries of functional specialism and describes the areas of skill and knowledge that a 'typical' (generalist personnel practitioner for an organisation with 100-300 employees, reporting direct to the chief executive, with administrative support) personnel professional might reasonably be expected to have. It does not include the definition of standards of performance as these are left to individual organisations to define due to the many possible variations based on an organisation's size, ownership, sector, etc.

As discussed earlier in this report, the advantages of having such a framework of knowledge and skills include encouraging and supporting the development of professional knowledge and competence and high standards of performance among personnel practitioners, and hence improving HR credibility and professionalism. A framework can also provide guidance to professional associations and other educational bodies for the development of people involved in the fields of personnel management and development. It can act as a basis against which the development needs of association members can be assessed, and can provide a basis for syllabuses for education and training programmes and publications. The framework can also act as a benchmark for HR professionals to compare their knowledge, skills and abilities with those that their peers consider appropriate. And importantly, it is a means of providing a focus within the increasingly complex field of personnel management.

The next section of this chapter provides a snapshot of a framework of HR skills and knowledge. This snapshot is expanded in the following sections, explaining not only the content of the framework, but also how it can be used for the purposes identified above.

V.2 Global framework of the HR body of knowledge

<b>HRM principles</b>
-----------------------

Operating within:

<b>Organisation context</b>	<b>Sector/Industry context</b>	<b>Country context</b>
-----------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------

Defined by:

<b>Job levels</b>	<b>Job roles</b>
-------------------	------------------

Determining skill and knowledge requirements:

<b>I. Personal</b>	<b>II. Organisational</b>	<b>III. Managerial</b>	<b>IV. Functional</b>
I.1 Communication	II.1 Knowledge of the environment	III.1 Management of self	IV.1 HR planning and staffing
I.2 Decision making and problem solving	II.2 Knowledge of the industry/sector	III.2 Management of people	IV.2 Performance management and development
I.3 Business acumen	II.3 Knowledge of the organisation	III.3 Management of resources	IV.3 Employee and labour relations
I.4 Credibility and professionalism	II.4 Impact assessment	III.4 Management of operations, including outsourcing	IV.4 Compensation and benefits
I.5 Leadership	II.5 The HR department as a part of the organisation	III.5 Management of information	IV.5 Health, safety, welfare and security
I.6 Relationship management		III.6 Change management	IV.6 Systems and information management
I.7 Adaptability			IV.7 Organisational design and development

### V.3 Contextual analysis

Before being able to determine the appropriate set of skills and knowledge required by HR practitioners doing a particular job at a particular level in a particular organisation in a particular country, it is essential to consider the whole environment in which this individual is working. This means analysing the first three levels of the Global Framework in terms of the relevant situation. Without this, there is a risk of reaching inappropriate solutions for the country, organisation or job for which the skill and knowledge requirements are being defined. This is crucial when designing training courses for particular audiences, or setting standards that are to be applied in a given context.

As discussed in the literature review, problems can arise where the consequences of not abiding by laws may have major financial or operational consequences for the organisation. Factors such as legislative demands and the economic wealth of a country need to be considered to develop an understanding of the national context. Many studies in the literature have identified these issues of cross-national comparisons (see for example Adler 1997, Francesco & Gold 1998, Gooderham et al 1999, Hofstede 1991, Mueller 1994, Sorge 1991, Teagarden & Von Glinow 1997, Trompenaars 1998).

The examples of key issues and questions in the following sections will be of use to people looking to adapt standards or training programmes that have been produced in a different country, industry or organisation. The list will also be useful for those wanting to develop standards or training programmes that cross national, industrial or organisational boundaries.

#### **V.3.1 HRM principles**

The first stage of this process of contextual analysis is to refer to the principles of HRM on which HR activities are based. These principles have been defined as a combination of generic rules and specific examples of practices in different countries. The following is an example list of topics relevant to HRM that is needed to start the analysis. The list is not exhaustive, but raises many of the key issues that should be considered.

- Motivation (see also Iyengar & Lepper 1999)
  1. What is the accepted wisdom in the relevant country with regard to what motivates people?
  2. How does the national culture influence the rewarding of desired behaviour or the punishing of poor performance?
  3. What is the relative importance of financial rewards or security and status rewards for employee motivation?
  4. Do employees expect a 'job-for-life' or do they expect to move between jobs on a relatively frequent basis?
  
- Learning
  5. What are the favoured learning styles?
  6. To what level have employees been educated through the national education system?

7. Are employees responsible for their own training and development or is responsibility assumed by their employer?
  8. What facilities and media are available to support the training and development of employees?
  9. What national or regional schemes exist to promote learning in the workplace?
  10. Does the country have personnel management courses available at national, regional or industry levels?
- Teams and individuals
    11. Is the culture one in which individual effort is assumed to be a key to organisational performance or is the assumption that effective work involves teamwork?
    12. To what extent does the organisational structure support team effort as opposed to individual effort?
  - Organisational culture
    13. What are the shared beliefs and values in the organisation? Do they vary with different groups within the organisation?
    14. How strong is the organisational culture?
    15. What are the power structures between departments in the organisation?
  - Management theory
    16. How would you describe the management style?
    17. Is centralised control or decentralised control favoured?
    18. Do decision-making structures tend to be hierarchical or collegial?
  - Change management
    19. Is the prospect of change seen as a welcome opportunity or is it seen as a threat?
    20. Who takes responsibility within the organisation to manage major change initiatives?
    21. Is the organisation, industry or country as a whole undergoing a period of rapid change or is it relative stability?

### **V.3.2 The work environment**

As we can see, these basic principles are moulded by the national, industrial and organisational context in which they are being applied. In order to analyse this context, we need to consider these levels in more depth.

#### **Organisational context**

- Size
  1. How large is the organisation?
  2. Is the organisation in a period of growth, stability or decline?

- Ownership
  3. Is the organisation privately or publicly owned?
  4. For privately owned organisations, is it stock market owned, owned by banks or family owned?
  5. To what extent are employees involved in the ownership of the organisation?
  6. What are the expectations of the major investors in the organisation?
- Culture
  7. What are the cultural values of the organisation?
  8. How well aligned are the HRM practices to the culture?
  9. What is the identity the organisation is creating for itself?
- Technology
  10. How advanced is the use of technology in the organisation?
- Markets
  11. Which markets does the organisation serve?
  12. Who are the current and potential competitors?
  13. What is unique about the organisation in the eyes of its customers or clients?
  14. What are the goals of the organisation in terms of desired capabilities?
- Location
  15. Where in the country/world is the organisation based relative to its suppliers, customers and employees?
  16. To what extent does the organisation operate on a global scale?
  17. In how many countries does the organisation operate?
  18. Do employees transfer between countries to carry out their work?
- Outsourcing
  19. Are any of the HR activities of the organisation outsourced?
  20. Are there any providers offering outsourcing services for HR activities?

### **Sector/Industry context**

- Stability
  21. How fast is the pace of change in the sector?
  22. What is the life-cycle of organisations within the industry/sector?
- Expectations of stakeholders
  23. Within the sector/industry in particular, are there any peculiar demands on the organisation from its stakeholders, e.g. environmental concerns, maximum profit, social acceptance, lifelong employment, etc?
  24. What are the industry shifts, and where do you find early indicators of them?

- National or regional standards
25. Are there agreements or regulations set at national, regional or local levels which affect employment in this industry/sector?

### **National context**

- Economic wealth
26. What is the comparative economic wealth of the country on a global scale?  
27. What are the accepted forms of financial reward for employees?
- Legal and regulatory systems
28. What legislation and regulations apply to employment rights in the country?  
29. What is the body of legislation and regulations regarding human rights in the country and how does this relate to the employment of individuals in the workplace?  
30. How is the system of industrial relations legislated or regulated?
- Labour market
31. How stable is the labour market?  
32. What are the labour demographics that affect the country, industry and organisation?  
33. Are there any shortages of employees based on skill requirements or location?  
34. How extensive are alternatives to long-term, full-time employment in the country?  
35. What are the most common methods of recruitment and selection in the country?
- Government influence
36. How strong is the influence of the national government on employment activities?  
37. To what extent are organisations free to choose their employment arrangements?
- Ethics
38. How are issues of integrity and confidentiality addressed?  
39. Is employment equity a key issue in the field of employment?  
40. Is diversity encouraged in employment? How is this managed?  
41. What is the value accorded to family life for employees?
- Formalisation of work
42. Are formalisation and standardisation of work organisation more appreciated, or is change more desirable?  
43. How does the country compare with others on a global scale with respect to power distance and uncertainty avoidance?
- Quality of life
44. To what extent is the quality of life of employees valued by organisations?

- Manager /subordinate relationships

45. What is considered to make a manager effective?

46. In what form does employee feedback take place?

47. Is the managerial culture more people or task oriented?

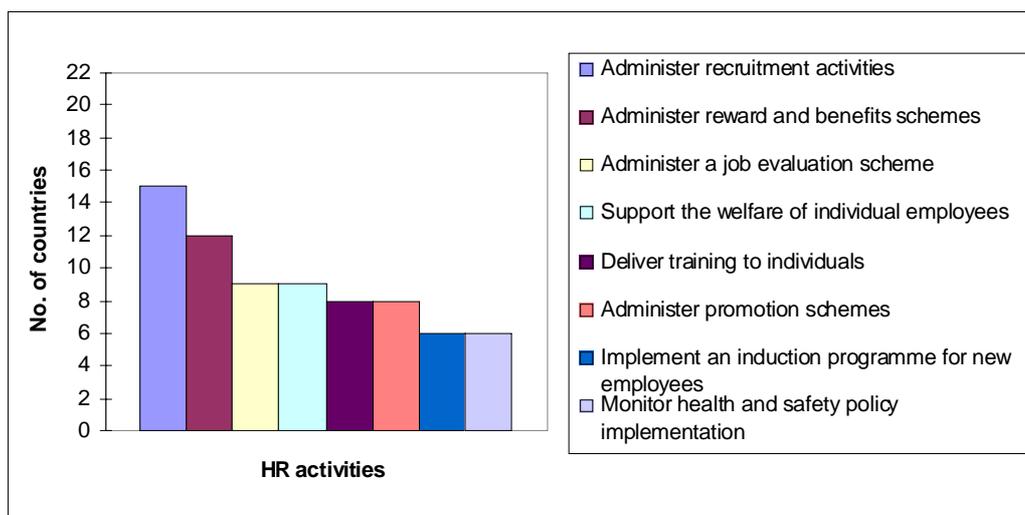
### **V.3.3 Job levels and roles**

These wider contexts described above determine the environment in which the individual HR practitioner is working. However, the actual role that the individual is carrying out and the level at which they are operating determine in greater detail the actual skill and knowledge requirements. The distinction between a level (e.g. administrator, functional specialist, team leader, middle manager, or executive manager) and a role (e.g. specialist, generalist, or strategist) can often be confused. The extent of differentiation also varies between contexts, such as between organisations of different size.

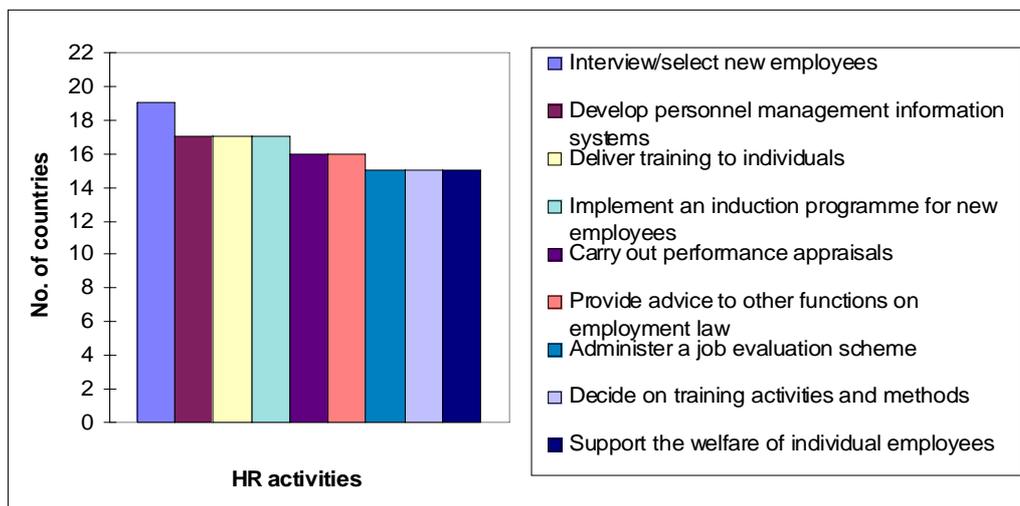
The differentiation between levels can best be described through the presentation of examples. Based on the responses received from the WFPMA members' survey, Figures 21, 22 and 23 demonstrate the most common activities of generalist practitioners in large organisations. It is clear that there is a consensus across the countries that participated in the survey (see Appendix 2) that certain types of HR activity are associated with the level at which the HR practitioner is operating.

In the following section, the full range of potential elements of skills and knowledge gleaned from countries around the globe are presented.

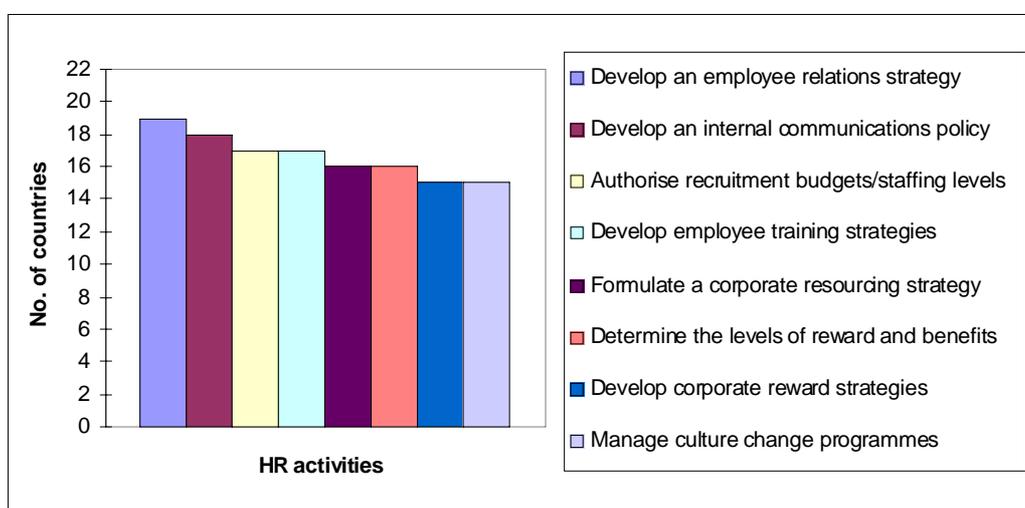
**Figure 21. Primary responsibilities of support/administrative roles**



**Figure 22. Primary responsibilities of professional/specialist roles**



**Figure 23. Primary responsibilities of senior/strategic roles**



V.4 Elements of skills and knowledge

Following the analysis of the context, the following lists provide a choice of skills and knowledge that a personnel practitioner may need in order to be effective in the environment identified. The lists are presented in a relatively arbitrary order, generally following the processes of employment from recruitment through retention to termination where this is applicable, else progressing from general to more specific skills and knowledge.

<b>I. Personal</b>	
I.1 Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate and influence</li> <li>• Interpersonal effectiveness</li> <li>• written, oral and other communications media</li> <li>• sensitivity to others</li> <li>• persuasion skills</li> <li>• negotiation skills</li> <li>• listening skills</li> <li>• presentation skills</li> <li>• ability to initiate/conduct/promote/facilitate interactions</li> </ul>
I.2 Decision making and problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cognitive complexity and agility</li> <li>• analysis</li> <li>• problem solving</li> <li>• decision making</li> <li>• access to decision makers</li> </ul>
I.3 Business acumen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• business acumen</li> <li>• strategic planning</li> <li>• results orientation</li> </ul>
I.4 Credibility and professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal credibility</li> <li>• achievement directed assertiveness</li> <li>• partnership development</li> <li>• define own role in organisation</li> <li>• develop and maintain a professional image</li> <li>• continuous learning</li> <li>• technological competence</li> </ul>
I.5 Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visionary</li> <li>• proactive</li> <li>• influence</li> <li>• inspire</li> <li>• guide</li> <li>• provide clear direction</li> <li>• resilience to opposition</li> </ul>
I.6 Relationship management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand group processes</li> <li>• team commitment</li> <li>• ability to work with others</li> <li>• relationship orientation</li> <li>• skilled manager of relationships</li> <li>• manage expectations</li> </ul>
I.7 Adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creativity</li> <li>• tolerance for stress/ambiguity/change</li> </ul>

<b>II. Organisational</b>	
II.1 Knowledge of the external environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the social/economic/political environment, including product and labour markets, legislative and regulatory frameworks, etc.</li> </ul>
II.2 Knowledge of the industry/sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stakeholder perspectives</li> <li>• sector/industry standards</li> </ul>
II.3 Knowledge of the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• market position, vision, mission, management style</li> <li>• organisation structure and culture</li> <li>• organisation development and change</li> <li>• cross-functional flexibility</li> <li>• who the stakeholders are</li> </ul>
II.4 Impact assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• awareness of the environment</li> <li>• ability to assess the impact of the external environment on the organisation</li> <li>• strategic business perspective</li> <li>• how to achieve strategic contribution to organisation success</li> <li>• understand and contribute to the organisation as a whole</li> <li>• alignment with organisation needs and goals</li> </ul>
II.5 The HR department as a part of the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• manage the personnel function: vision and fit, staffing, physical resources, financial resources</li> <li>• provide organisational consultancy</li> <li>• plan, model and forecast trends</li> <li>• develop and implement strategies, policies, practices</li> <li>• measure results</li> <li>• understand the contribution/role of the department to/in the organisation as a whole – manage the interface</li> <li>• empower line management and employees</li> </ul>

<b>III. Managerial</b>	
III.1 Management of self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• performance management</li> <li>• time management</li> <li>• career management</li> </ul>
III.2 Management of people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lead/guide/give feedback</li> <li>• identify development needs</li> <li>• evaluate performance</li> <li>• able to gain trust and respect</li> <li>• concern for others (individuals and groups)</li> <li>• effective working relationships</li> <li>• fair and ethical</li> <li>• corporate loyalty and responsibility</li> <li>• strategic management</li> </ul>
III.3 Management of resources/assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plan, budget, control and evaluate</li> <li>• human</li> <li>• financial</li> <li>• technical</li> <li>• systems</li> </ul>

III.4 Management of operations, including outsourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● manage projects and products</li> <li>● plan, implement, maintain</li> <li>● quality orientation</li> <li>● customer value creation</li> <li>● auditing</li> <li>● use of outsourcing</li> </ul>
III.5 Management of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● identify, gather, manipulate, interpret and report information</li> <li>● manage information systems</li> <li>● statistical and financial skills</li> <li>● deal with qualitative and quantitative data</li> </ul>
III.6 Change management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● change management</li> <li>● innovation, creativity</li> <li>● reorganisation</li> <li>● process change - goal clarification, problem identification</li> <li>● culture change - sharing knowledge across boundaries, employee behaviour</li> </ul>

<b>IV. Functional</b>	
IV.1 HR planning and staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● HR planning, staffing, resourcing</li> <li>● Gather information, identify trends, analyse, forecast, plan, take action and monitor</li> <li>● Develop/implement/monitor recruitment, selection, appointment, deployment and placement processes and activities (including the use of assessment tools, interviewing, advertisements, contract preparation, etc.)</li> <li>● job analysis, job description, job specification</li> <li>● work organisation (flexibility, etc.)</li> <li>● promotion</li> <li>● succession planning</li> <li>● employee absence (maternity, sickness, holiday)</li> <li>● knowledge of legal framework of employment rights</li> <li>● equal employment opportunities</li> <li>● termination – organisational exit</li> <li>● international HRM: culture, legislation, expatriation and repatriation, multinational corporations</li> </ul>
IV.2 Performance management and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● key principles/techniques of learning</li> <li>● knowledge management and the value of intellectual capital</li> <li>● managing learning processes</li> <li>● organisational learning / learning organisation</li> <li>● funding and cost/benefit analysis</li> <li>● training needs analysis and employee performance monitoring</li> <li>● total performance management</li> <li>● training interventions: plan, design, develop, recommend, deliver, implement, measure, monitor, evaluate</li> <li>● induction</li> <li>● performance development</li> <li>● career planning/management</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing groups and individuals</li> <li>• long-term development</li> <li>• management development</li> <li>• technology-based learning</li> <li>• total quality management</li> <li>• appraisal: goal setting, results measurement/assessment process, feedback processes, evaluation</li> <li>• appraisal criteria, standards, documentation and methods</li> <li>• managing poor performance</li> </ul>
<p>IV.3 Employee and labour relations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recommend/implement/monitor industrial relations and employee relations strategies (staff consultation and participation)</li> <li>• knowledge of and compliance with legislation employee counselling, support and welfare</li> <li>• awareness of organisational culture and management style</li> <li>• ethical approach</li> <li>• deal with union representation and collective bargaining</li> <li>• produce and enforce terms and conditions of employment</li> <li>• produce and enforce disciplinary and grievance procedures</li> <li>• dispute/conflict resolution and corrective action</li> <li>• design, implementation and evaluation of communication programmes</li> <li>• employee involvement: teamworking, suggestion schemes, participative management, employee attitude /opinion /satisfaction surveys</li> <li>• international employee relations</li> </ul>
<p>IV.4 Compensation and benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• total compensation: reward, benefits, recognition and remuneration</li> <li>• develop/implement/administer strategies and programmes</li> <li>• job pricing and job evaluation, pay structures</li> <li>• budgeting and cost control</li> <li>• fixed and variable pay schemes</li> <li>• non-money benefits</li> <li>• pensions</li> <li>• payroll systems management (including taxation)</li> <li>• develop equitable (legally compliant and externally competitive) policies and systems - to encourage people to join, contribute, remain with the organisation</li> <li>• awareness of needs of special groups - executives, expatriates</li> <li>• team/individual reward</li> <li>• equality management</li> </ul>

<p>IV.5 Health, safety, welfare and security</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding of issues and legislation</li> <li>• management and evaluation of policies and programmes</li> <li>• occupational health and hygiene</li> <li>• employee assistance programmes</li> <li>• employee wellness programmes</li> <li>• stress management</li> <li>• ergonomics</li> <li>• behavioural science</li> <li>• compensation for torts</li> </ul>
<p>IV.6 Systems and information management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determine requirements (integration of information)</li> <li>• develop/maintain information systems: manual and computerised</li> <li>• formulate/implement/manage systems, programmes, practices</li> <li>• information technology capabilities (computerised human resource information systems)</li> <li>• research, analyse, report, disseminate</li> <li>• awareness of confidentiality/sensitivity issues</li> <li>• internal communication processes</li> </ul>
<p>IV.7 Organisational design and development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organisation structure and design</li> <li>• organisation development</li> <li>• organisation performance vis-à-vis HR effectiveness</li> <li>• strategic HRM</li> <li>• change management: causes/diagnosis, process, implications</li> </ul>

## **VI. Training and education**

### **VI.1 Introduction**

There is no single way to deliver training and education. For example, we can distinguish between formal learning in the classroom between student and tutor, informal learning between colleagues over lunch, experience gained from doing a particular job, self-teaching through reading, etc. As we can see, the way in which we deliver training and education is bound by many factors:

- Who is the intended audience?
- What resources do we have available (physical space, technology, media, tutors)?
- What are the cost restrictions we need to apply?
- What are the learning objectives of the training/education – are they knowledge-based or skill-based?

In the marketplace there is a demand for continuous learning opportunities, through seminars and workshops on specific subjects, and certified training programmes at basic, intermediate and advanced levels. To meet this demand, Associations can run their own programmes or recognise HRM courses run by other universities, institutes and professional bodies.

This shows the diversity of approaches to the delivery of training and education in HRM currently in practice around the world. The following sections of this chapter will outline what the key considerations are in designing delivery mechanisms, and give some examples of training and education programmes which are currently in operation.

### **VI.2 Delivery options**

As discussed in the previous chapter, based on the survey of WFPMA members, many methods of delivering events for knowledge and skill acquisition were identified. With regard to formal learning programmes, these involved a mixture of training sessions, seminars and workshops held either in classrooms, by distance learning or in-company.

For syllabus-based education programmes, there was also differentiation between levels of competence and division between contact and self-study time: courses either being full-time or part-time, classroom based, by flexible or distance learning or run in-company. There is also the provision of continuous learning opportunities. To provide more informal learning experiences, Associations also offer help and advice with work experience and networking and hold conferences.

One thing that was very clear from the survey was that the training courses offered by Associations cover the full range of skills and knowledge required by HR practitioners (see Figure 14).

### **VI.3 Case examples**

Training courses are offered by more than four out of five of the associations that responded to the survey. Below are a few examples of the ways in which such courses are structured, and the content they cover.

### **VI.3.1 Training courses in Portugal (APG)**

The Associação Portuguesa dos Gestores e Técnicos dos Recursos Humanos (APG) provides a number of specialist training courses for both trainers and for general HR practitioners. These courses are open to both APG members and non-members. The association does not recognise courses offered or run by other institutions. Around 200 people participate in the APG training courses each year. The main areas of training provision are in employment law, change management and strategic management.

Training for trainers is provided at different professional levels:

(264 hours training using 13 trainers)

- 1 – Identification and Analysis of Training Needs
- 2 – Foundation Course for Trainers
- 3 – Training and Development Dynamic Strategy
- 4 – Case Study for Trainers
- 5 – Multimedia in Training
- 6 – Trainers Toolkit: New Programs
- 7 – Interactive Foundation Course for Senior Trainers

General training is also offered for HR professionals:

(298 hours training using 17 trainers)

- 1 – HR Performance Evaluation
- 2 – Powerpoint for Presentations
- 3 – Effective HR Planning
- 4 – Recruitment and Selection
- 5 – Essential Interviewing Skills
- 6 – Temporary Employment
- 7 – Outdoors Training
- 8 – Communication Skills
- 9 – English for HR Managers
- 10 – Finance for HR
- 11 – Marketing for HR
- 12 – Teamwork and Performance
- 13 – Assertiveness Skills
- 14 – HR Administrative and Management Skills
- 15 – HR Training Management
- 16 – Job Evaluation

The APG also provides a number of regular seminars and conferences. These include a major employment law seminar that is held at seven different locations in Portugal. In addition, there are four themed annual conferences: the Annual Trainers Conference, the Annual Remuneration and Compensation Conference, the Public Administrative Matters Conference and the APG National Conference. There are also two international conferences, one in Lisbon and the other held in Brazil.

### **VI.3.2 Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management (IHRM)**

This is an example of an association that runs a number of certified training programmes, which have an attendance requirement in order to receive the certificate. The programmes are designed for practitioners operating at different levels of the organisation:

*Certificate training programmes at fundamental level:*

1. Foundation skills in HRM (10 modules each 2 x half-day sessions)
2. Fundamentals of HRM in Peoples' Republic of China (7 x 3-hour modules)

*Certificate training programmes at intermediate level:*

1. Supervisory Management (4 x 4-hour modules)
2. Train the Trainer (8 x half-day modules)
3. Recruitment and Selection (5 x 2-hour modules)
4. HR Employment Law (8 x half-day modules)

*Certificate training programme at advanced level:*

1. Advanced Training Management (6 x 4-hour modules)

The association also provides continuous learning opportunities in the form of seminars and workshops on specific subjects.

### **VI.3.3 Human Resources Institute of New Zealand (HRINZ)**

The HRINZ offers training courses both to its members and to non-members. At national level, all courses are run by the association, and it does not give formal recognition to courses offered or run by other institutions. Around 250 people participate in the HRINZ training courses each year, with three-day events being arranged each month. The areas of training currently being provided are:

- HR Foundations
- The HR Investment
- Structured Employment Interviewing
- Project-Based Learning & Coaching and Mentoring
- Strategic Human Resource Management

The HRINZ also holds an annual national conference. Local branches in New Zealand also provide training. For example, the professional development activities offered by the Auckland branch include a combination of workshops for starting level HR practitioners and networking and seminar opportunities for middle and senior level practitioners.

The 'Starting HR' Practitioner workshops include:

- Introduction to reward and recognition
- Competency-based, structured interviewing
- Job analysis
- Introduction to employment legislation
- HR measurement & benchmarking
- Training needs analysis
- Foundations of competency profiling
- Performance management

For 'Middle Practitioners' there are networking and seminar opportunities organised quarterly to discuss "hot topics". These topics are brainstormed several months prior to the scheduled meetings. There are also networking and seminar opportunities for 'Senior Practitioners' on an invitation only basis to discuss matters of strategic HR interest. The local branch is currently setting up a formal mentoring programme that will match up 'starting' HR practitioners with 'senior' HR practitioners who can provide guidance and support for people who want to develop their careers in HR.

#### **VI.3.4 Training programmes in Singapore (SHRI)**

The Singapore Human Resources Institute (SHRI) provides a number of training programmes based both on academic and practical objectives. Specifically, a recent innovation has been the *Essentials of Human Resource Management & Practice for SMEs* programme. As its title suggests, this course focuses on the key elements of HRM in small to medium-sized organisations, and is divided into three modules each with eight hours of tuition. There is also a wide range of workshops offered on particular topics. These include:

- Job analysis and evaluation
- Performance coaching
- Training needs analysis
- Recruiting foreign manpower
- Writing skills for HR practitioners.

The more academically-focused training courses are certified, and include the Certificate in Compensation and Benefits Management, the Certificate in Applied Psychology and the Certificate in People Management. Higher level academic qualifications are also offered, such as the Degree in HRM and Industrial Relations and the Masters in HRM. Such qualifications are awarded based on mandatory attendance requirements, assignments, projects, tests and examinations.

#### **VI.3.5 Hungarian Association for Human Resources Management (OHE)**

The Hungarian Association for Human Resources Management (OHE) is an example of a smaller personnel management association that primarily has corporate membership. Around 200 people attend the training courses provided by the association on an annual basis. The main courses provided are in recruitment and selection, employment law and training and development. In addition to these training programmes that focus on specific subjects, the OHE also runs a three-semester Human Resource Academy.

Many of the programmes run by the Hungarian association started as courses that had been requested by a certain company. Over time, these courses have developed into open programmes which has permitted attendance from companies which otherwise could not run such programmes in-house.

## **VII. Assessment and certification**

### **VII.1 Introduction**

In the development and training of personnel practitioners, the assessment and certification of learning plays an important role in the recognition of the professional experience, skills and knowledge of individuals. Certification can form the criteria of association membership, and can demonstrate an individual's adherence to standards and a commitment to staying abreast of new developments in the HR field. It is also a visual statement of professional status and as such is a useful tool in career advancement

In devising a scheme of certification it is important that the scheme allows individuals to demonstrate that their knowledge, skills and experience in a generalist or specialist role in HRM and/or HRD are sufficient to meet the criteria for professional competence. This can entail the demonstration of professional experience and/or the passing of a written comprehensive examination to meet pre-set requirements.

### **VII.2 Mechanisms**

As with training and development events, the majority of Associations runs its own certified courses of study or recognises courses run by other institutions. Such courses are different to the training programmes offered, as they often involve a number of modules, and have an assessment process that can result in the award of a certificate.

The various assessment mechanisms range from the practical to the more theoretical. For example, skills can be measured through a competency portfolio assessment, whereby an assessor is appointed to judge a person's work. An alternative mechanism, and one which is more widely used, is a written examination of knowledge which can take the form of multiple-choice or essay questions. These courses are assessed against standards at national or association level (Wiley 1999).

### **VII.3 Case examples**

In this section three examples of well-established systems of certification are presented, each one having been designed according to a different mechanism.

#### **VII.3.1 Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI) - USA**

In the USA, the HR credentialing body (HRCI) is separate from the HR association (the Society for Human Resource Management - SHRM). This means that the HRCI runs a voluntary programme, and is not accredited by anyone, nor does it accredit any programmes that use its body of knowledge content outline. Equally there is no membership scheme and it does not run any courses: it purely assesses and certifies the knowledge of HR practitioners. This certification scheme has been in place since 1976.

Complementary to the work of the HRCI, SHRM provides certification preparation courses of study, and these have been running since 1988. These courses are available in different modes of study, primarily on a part-time or in-company basis.

The certification scheme is intended for those currently working in the HR field. There are two possible designations: Professional in HR and Senior Professional in HR. The assessment structure is based on having achieved the prerequisite HR experience (a minimum of two years in a position involving HR at least 51% of the time) and passing a written examination. This examination is based on the technical and operational aspects of HR at the Professional level, and on strategic and policy issues in HR at Senior Professional level. There is no prior requirement to have a university degree. The examinations themselves are based on 250 multiple-choice questions tested over a period of four hours. For the certificate to be awarded, candidates must agree to abide by the SHRM Code of Ethics and the HRCI Model of Professional Excellence. Re-certification is possible but not mandatory after one year, either through evidence of continuing education and experience or through retesting. Each year, around 7,500 individuals follow the certification preparation courses, with an average examination success rate of approximately 50%. Currently, some 33,000 individuals hold the HRCI certification, of which 17,000 are members of SHRM.

### **VII.3.2 Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario (HRPAO) - Canada**

HRPAO is a regional HR professional association and since 1990 has been the body that is legally entitled to grant and administer the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation of Ontario.

The CHRP designation is awarded based on an examination and on acquired professional experience. The first step is to follow an academic programme that leads to the Certificate in Human Resource Management. Once this has been achieved, and providing an individual has the requisite professional experience and is sponsored by an existing CHRP member, that individual can either sit the Comprehensive Provincial Examination, or undergo a peer review process as long as this option remains available. The examinations are in essay format and focus on the application of knowledge. Candidates must also agree to comply with the HRPAO codes of behaviour. Once certified, individuals can remain certified so as long as they remain a member of HRPAO.

The courses leading to examination are offered on-site and off-site at accredited institutions on a part-time or full-time basis. Students must complete all four of the compulsory subjects in Tier I, and four of the speciality subjects in Tier II. These are:

#### Tier I -- Compulsory Subjects

- Human Resources Management
- Organisational Behaviour
- Finance and Accounting
- Labour Economics

#### Tier II -- Specialised Subjects

- Compensation
- Training and Development
- Labour Relations
- Occupational Health & Safety
- Human Resources Planning
- Human Resources Research and Information Systems (HRRIS)
- Designated Elective Course (DEC)

### **VII.3.3 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) - UK**

In the UK, the CIPD is the professional association as well as the certifying and awarding body. It is accredited by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications and the Open University. The CIPD has its own professional standards that have been developed through multiple stakeholders, and which have been mapped against the UK national standards. The certified courses of study run by the CIPD have been in place for 30 years.

Certification is awarded based on either experience and/or examination. The following list shows the different routes to CIPD certification:

- *Professional education*

Approved centres offer a variety of courses including flexible learning courses and assessment via essay style examination, assignments and a management report.

- *Competence assessment against national standards*

Individuals can gain both a National Vocational Qualification as well as the CIPD certification. This route is measured by the development of a professional portfolio that is assessed by a qualified assessor.

- *Professional assessment against CIPD standards*

Again, this route is based on experience via portfolio development and assessment through an approved centre.

- *Assessment of prior certified learning*

Relevant academic or professional qualifications previously gained are assessed against CIPD standards for certification to be awarded.

These courses and assessment centres are either accredited centres which run internally-assessed programmes, or approved centres that prepare students for assessment by CIPD national examinations. Courses are run using a range of modes of study, with the part-time option being the most popular. Each year, around 12,000 individuals are successful in passing the certified courses of study, with approximately 76,000 individuals currently holding certification, but over 95,000 either certified or working towards certification. The average pass rate for the examinations is 55%. There is a requirement to be a member of the CIPD in order to sit the CIPD examinations. Agreement to comply with the standards of professional conduct is also required of CIPD members.

Each of the certification routes described above has a different certification level, which in turn results in a different grade of membership:

- Certificate in Personnel Practice – Associate member
- Certificate in Training Practice – Associate member
- Professional Qualification Scheme – Licentiate member (after partial completion), Graduate member (upon completion of the whole programme).

There is no re-certification requirement but Continuing Professional Development records are required for upgrading membership.

## **VIII. Conclusions**

### **VIII.1 Project boundaries**

At the outset the HR Competencies and Professional Standards Project's aim was identified as being to develop a worldwide definition of what a personnel management professional is and does in terms of a global set of core competencies. This report has taken a major step towards achieving this aim by examining the range of practices and activities taking place in personnel management associations around the world, and by looking at what the literature can tell us.

One of the key exercises in this global project has been to consider the individual perspective of each country involved in terms of its organisational practices, the education and training of individuals and its legislative and social systems. None of these aspects are static, particularly in the business environment, so not only do we need to establish the historical context when carrying out such a project, but we also need to know about the way in which change is happening. For this project, this information has been gained partly from academic writings on these subjects, and partly from the responses to the survey questionnaires. Equally, the summaries in this report have to be read against a background of diversity within countries, as well as between countries, due to the differential effects of the size and nature of organisations in which people work.

### **VIII.2 The status of HR and competencies**

The issue of personnel management as a profession is one that is important to this project as it considers the establishment of a set of professional standards. However, the status of the field of personnel management throughout the world implies that there is as yet no consensus on this point. There is currently little evidence of the requirement to be formally qualified in personnel management in order to be called a personnel professional.

It is, however, clear from the literature that there does exist a personnel management body of knowledge, and that the elements of this body of knowledge required by individuals varies according to job roles. In turn, this variation influences the contribution which personnel management can make to the organisation as a whole. It is also clear that the development of a competency model for personnel management will be a key milestone in the process of developing the personnel management function further, despite the inherent difficulties in establishing such a framework. HR competencies are one of the key enabling factors for an organisation to create its own unique sustainable competitive advantage.

### **VIII.3 The associations and their activities**

The data from the questionnaires corroborates many of the issues identified in the literature review, and provides practical evidence for analysing the activities of personnel management associations around the world. Of course, personnel management associations vary greatly, for example, in size, but there are many common features. Usually, they have a mixture of individual and organisational membership statuses with a minimum of restrictions being set on becoming a member. Regulation takes place by category of membership in terms of

achievements, status, location, etc. Most countries have more than one personnel management association covering similar if not the same interests, so the national co-ordination of activities is crucial to the credibility of personnel management.

In terms of the education levels of the associations' members, the vast majority of individual members have a degree, and most often in business studies. This is a positive sign, if one believes that the HR function needs to become more business-focused.

Hence, from this perspective this situation has improved over time, and looks set to continue, with the pressure increasing on individuals working in HR to be qualified to degree level and to have a personnel management qualification. Personnel management associations are responding by offering formal courses of study at different levels, and particularly training courses to both members and non-members. Courses are being offered on a flexible basis as well as through traditional full-time routes, hence perhaps enabling additional students to enrol. Many courses have been in place for a number of years, and other associations are expressing the desire to establish such courses in the near future. As well as formal courses of study, there are also a number of associations awarding certificates of competence and enforcing continuing professional development requirements on their certificate holders.

The production of guidelines on personnel management activities is widespread across the world's personnel management associations, and covers all personnel management activities. The most common guidelines include those for recruitment and selection, employment law, health and safety and industrial relations. However, the once popular role for the personnel management function, that of counselling and welfare, is regulated by few formal guidelines. The production of a code of conduct is almost equally common, which is a clear indicator of the will to develop professional personnel management standards.

Regarding the division of activities between different levels of personnel practitioner around the world, a relatively clear picture emerges that corresponds with the findings from the literature review. The professional/specialist level of practitioner is primarily responsible for the technical activities, whilst the senior level is focusing more on the strategic management issues. These findings indicate that in order to shift the focus of personnel management further towards the strategic activities, it is the middle level of professionals and specialists who need to be targeted in terms of developing their roles. Very few activities were seen as outside of the scope of the personnel function, which may be surprising given the coverage in the literature that indicates a growing trend to devolve personnel management functional activities to the line.

#### VIII.4 The core HR body of knowledge

The aim of developing a global framework of HR skills and knowledge was to create a set of guidelines for worldwide professional standards. These standards should then be helpful to emerging professional associations in developing HR standards in their own country. Equally they should be capable of being used by associations with existing sets of standards to benchmark what they have done against the activities of other WFPMA associations. This may also facilitate the mutual recognition of standards across national boundaries.

A framework of knowledge and skills is useful to associations in a number of respects, such as determining criteria for association membership, developing teaching syllabuses and

setting standards of performance within the profession. However, as mentioned above, any framework must take account of the context in which it is being applied, as the appropriate set of skills and knowledge for an HR practitioner will vary greatly, depending on the country/industry/organisation in which they are working and on their particular job or role.

This means considering how HRM principles are presented in any given country, including looking at perceptions of motivation, learning, teams, culture, management theory and change management. It also requires an examination of the organisation context: its size, ownership, culture, use of technology, location, markets and opportunities for outsourcing. At the industry/sector level, the stability, the expectations of stakeholders and any national or regional standards and regulations need to be investigated. And at the national level, it is important to consider the effect of economic wealth, legal and regulatory systems, the labour market, government influence, ethics, formalisation of work, quality of life, and management/subordinate relationships on the work that the HR practitioner must carry out. In addition to all of this, the skill and knowledge requirements of the HR practitioner will be influenced by whether they are operating in a specialist, generalist or strategist role, and whether they are at the administrative, professional, middle management or executive management level.

Once the context is clear, there is a choice available from a large number of elements that make up the set of skills and knowledge required to carry out the HR role. These can be divided into personal, organisational, managerial and functional competencies. The personal competencies include elements of communication, decision-making, problem solving, business acumen, credibility, professionalism, leadership, relationship management and adaptability. The organisational competencies include knowledge of the environment both external and internal to the organisation and the industry or sector as a whole, the ability to assess the impact of this environment in organisational terms and an awareness of the role of the HR department within the organisation. Managerial competencies include the management of one's self, other people, resources, operations, information and change.

The functional competencies are perhaps more widely known and include HR planning and staffing; performance management and development; employee and labour relations; compensation and benefits; health, safety, welfare and security; systems information and management; and organisational design and development.

### VIII.5 Teaching and development of HR specialists

There is a wide range of delivery, assessment and certification methods currently in use around the world. This recognises the fact that the body of HR practitioners has a number of different learning styles, has differences in the preferred times and locations for development events, and has a varied amount of professional experience and formal educational qualifications per individual. Some practitioners are at the beginning of their career, others have reached the pinnacle, and different development and training events are needed for these different levels of experience. Equally, in different countries, there are different mechanisms in place for education, different media available to trainers and different values attached to the training and development of professionals.

As a result of this diversity of demand and supply factors, many options are available to practitioners wanting to undertake training, or wanting to gain a recognised qualification.

Training events can either be based on knowledge or skill development, or can be a combination of the two. Formal programmes can take the form of workshops, seminars and courses held in classrooms, by distance learning or in-company. These events are usually organised according to level of competence, and vary in the amount of contact and self-study time. Such events are often part of a larger framework of continuous professional development for HR practitioners. The range of HR activities that these training events cover is very wide across the globe.

Certification of learning also has a fundamental role to play in the professionalism of HR, and again there are various routes by which this certification can be achieved. Certification can be awarded by WFPMA member associations, or the association may choose to accredit other institutions to provide this facility. Assessment can be designed to test skills, knowledge or both aspects of competence, and can be in the form of written examinations or by presentation to an approved assessor.

### VIII.6 Implications

There are a number of implications for the personnel function arising from this study, not least of all to determine a strategy to meet the challenges of the emerging environment. This strategy can be determined at a number of levels, including individual, functional, organisational and national, and this study has demonstrated that it can also benefit from input at an international level. The commonalities between the activities and standards of personnel practitioners in each of the countries involved far outweigh the differences, showing that countries have the opportunity to learn from each other.

This report has suggested some practical ideas for the content of professional standards, and how these might be translated into sets of skills and knowledge for the development of personnel professionals. The opportunity now exists for associations to share their experiences and make use of the examples provided by others.

In general terms, the commonalities between the activities and standards of personnel practitioners in each of the countries who participated in the survey outweigh the differences, showing that countries do have the opportunity to learn from each other.

The information gathered in this study may now be developed further to define a worldwide competency model for personnel management, again using the experiences of different personnel management associations. Having started to distinguish the challenges for the future, the necessary competencies and behavioural practices can be identified.

In order to investigate this, further detailed research will need to be undertaken, examining the specific competence requirements for carrying out HR practitioner roles at the support, administrative and senior levels. Once this has been tackled, it will then mean the final project aim will be made a reality, and standards could be expressed in such a way that they would be helpful to emerging professional associations wishing to develop HR professionalism in their country. It would also aid the achievement of the key project applications:

- Mutual recognition of qualifications, enabling improved flexibility to personnel and development professionals around the world whom might wish to live and work in another country.

- Raised standards of professionalism, as countries with less developed standards of personnel and development might adopt the standards identified by the World Federation.

There is clearly a need to continue the research in this area in order to build on the work already completed, and to clarify in greater depth the findings of this particular phase of the HR Competencies and Professional Standards Project.

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## **Appendices**

### Note for Appendix 1:

The percentages given in the summary are the percentage of all valid cases.

The averages stated are the median of all values given.

## **Appendix 1. Personnel management associations questionnaire**

### SECTION I - THE NATURE OF THE ASSOCIATION

#### **1. Who can be members of your association?**

Individuals only	23%
Organisations only	9%
Individuals and organisations	64%
Other, please specify	4%

#### **2a. If membership includes individuals, is this limited according to:**

	<u>Yes</u>
Sector of the economy	0%
If Yes,	
Public sector employees only	0%
Private sector employees only	0%
Education	18%
Job experience	39%
Language/region	6%
Country	20%
Other, please specify	18%

#### **2b. If membership includes organisations, is this limited according to:**

	<u>Yes</u>
Sector of the economy	0%
If Yes,	
Public sector organisations only	0%
Private sector organisations only	0%

Size of organisation	0%
Region	7%
Domestic organisations only	14%
Other, please specify	18%

**3. Does your association have different categories of membership?**

Yes	No
73%	27%

**4a. How many categories of membership are there?**

5 categories

**4b. What criteria are used to distinguish between these categories of membership?**

1. Individual/organisation status	58%
2. Education level	13%
3. Work experience	10%
4. Achievement of standards	6%
5. Seniority of individual	6%
7. Size of organisation	2%
6. Fees paid	2%
8. Location	2%

**5. How many members does your association have? Please give an approximation if the exact figure is not known.**

- A. In total: 2,274 individuals
- B. In total: 274 organisations

**6. Approximately, how many paid employees does your association have?**

In total: 9                      Full-time: 7                      Part-time: 2

**7a. Are you the only personnel management association in your country?**

Yes	No
41%	59%

**7b. If 'no', on which areas do the other personnel management associations focus?**

	<u>Yes</u>
Personnel management generally	27%
Personnel management specifically (excluding training and development)	9%
Training and development specifically	36%
Reward, remuneration, compensation and benefits	18%
Employee relations, industrial relations, employment law	23%
Other, please specify	14%

SECTION II: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**EDUCATION**

**1. In your association, what is the approximate proportion of individual members:**

A. With a university degree	85 %
B. With secondary education only	18 %

**2a. Based on your association's membership statistics, list the three university degree disciplines most widely held by personnel management practitioners in your country:**

Business studies	51%
Economics	7%

Psychology	15%
Humanities/Arts/Languages	5%
Law	12%
Other	10%

- 2b. In your association, what is the approximate proportion of individual members with a university degree in the disciplines you have listed above?**

100 % of members with a university degree in the disciplines listed above

- 3. Are personnel management practitioners in your country more likely to have a degree now than 10 years ago?**

Yes	No	Do not know
96%	4%	0%

- 4. In your opinion, how important is it in your country that a personnel management practitioner has a university degree?**

Very important	73%
Quite important	27%
Not important	0%

- 5. In your opinion, how important is it in your country that a personnel management practitioner has followed a course of study in personnel management?**

Very important	77%
Quite important	23%
Not important	0%

**PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT CERTIFIED COURSES OF STUDY**

- 6. Does your association run professional personnel management certified courses of study?**

Yes	No
57%	43%

- 7. Does your association recognise professional personnel management certified courses of study which are run by other institutions?**

Yes	No
55%	45%

*If you answered No to questions 6 and 7, go to question 20a.*

- 8. How long has your certified course of study been in existence?**

20 years

- 9. Do these certified courses of study differentiate between different levels of competence?**

Yes	No
55%	45%

- 10a. If they do differentiate between levels, what is the approximate total time (including contact and self-study time) needed to complete the certified course of study at the following levels?**

A. Elementary level: 114 hours

B. Advanced level: 216 hours

- 10b. If they do not differentiate between levels, what is the approximate total time (including contact and self-study time) needed to complete the certified course of study?**

292 hours

**11a. Are there different modes of study for the certified course of study?**

Yes	No
70%	30%

**11b. What proportion of students follow the certified course of study:**

A. Full-time	70%
B. Part-time	50%
C. Distance learning	12%
D. In-company	6%
E. Other	14%

**12. Approximately how many individuals pass the certified course of study each year?**

175 individuals

**13. Approximately how many individuals currently hold the course certificate?**

4,200 individuals

**14. Of those who follow the certified courses of study through your association, approximately what proportion of these sit a formal/written examination?**

100%

**15. Does your association award certificates for demonstrating competence in the field of professional personnel management (rather than students having to sit an examination)?**

Yes	No
54%	46%

**16. Do you have a re-certification requirement for courses of study or demonstration of competence?**

Yes	No
8%	92%

**17. Do you have continuing professional development requirements?**

Yes	No
54%	46%

**18. Approximately how many members gain your association's professional personnel management certificate each year?**

200 members

**19. Approximately how many members currently hold your association's certificate in total?**

600 members

#### **PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT TRAINING COURSES**

**20a. Does your association offer training courses which are not part of a formal course of study?**

Yes	No
81%	19%

**20b. If so, are these training courses offered to:**

A. Members only	0%
B. Non-members only	0%
C. Members and non-members	100%

**21. Does your association licence other institutions to run training courses?**

Yes	No
6%	94%

**22. Does your association recognise training courses offered by other institutions?**

Yes	No
59%	41%

**23. Approximately how many people participate in training and development courses and programmes offered by your association each year?**

550 individuals

**24. Does your association provide, licence or recognise training courses in the following areas?**

	<u>Yes</u>
A. Recruitment and selection	94%
B. Retention/promotion/appraisal	82%
C. Pay and benefits	82%
D. Health and safety	73%
E. Industrial relations	77%
F. Employee communication	75%
G. Employment law	81%
H. Discipline and grievance	57%
I. Equal opportunities	53%
J. Environmental issues	36%
K. Training and development	90%
L. International personnel management	60%
M. Change management	89%
N. Strategic management	88%
O. Counselling/welfare	60%
P. Computing/IT	43%

**25. From the following list, can you identify a maximum of three main areas in which your association provides training courses? (Please do not tick more than three)**

A. Recruitment and selection	32%
B. Retention/promotion/appraisal	5%
C. Pay and benefits	32%
D. Health and safety	9%
E. Industrial relations	27%
F. Employee communication	0%
G. Employment law	41%
H. Discipline and grievance	9%
I. Equal opportunities	0%
J. Environmental issues	0%
K. Training and development	41%
L. International personnel management	5%
M. Change management	27%
N. Strategic management	23%
O. Counselling/welfare	0%
P. Computing/IT	0%

### SECTION III: SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

**1a. Does your association define or publish guidelines on the skills and knowledge required for personnel management activities and responsibilities?**

Yes	No
53%	47%

**1b. If so, which areas do these guidelines cover?**

A. Recruitment and selection	80%
B. Retention/promotion/appraisal	40%
C. Pay and benefits	50%

D. Health and safety	40%
E. Industrial relations	70%
F. Employee communication	40%
G. Employment law	70%
H. Discipline and grievance	60%
I. Equal opportunities	40%
J. Environmental issues	10%
K. Training and development	50%
L. International personnel management	30%
M. Change management	40%
N. Strategic management	50%
O. Counselling/welfare	20%
P. Computing/IT	20%
Q. Other, please specify	0%

**2. Do you publish formal guidelines on a code of conduct for personnel management practitioners?**

Yes	No
77%	23%

**3. Are there any penalties for any members failing to abide with any of these published guidelines?**

Yes	No	Not applicable
27%	46%	27%

**4. In this question, we distinguish between three levels of personnel management practitioner:**

- 1. Support/administrative**
- 2. Professional/specialist**
- 3. Senior/strategic management.**

**Based on these levels, for which of the following activities is a personnel management practitioner responsible in your country?**

**A. Recruitment, retention, promotion and termination**

	Support /Admin.	Prof. /Specialist	Senior	N/A
A. Administer recruitment activities	68%	50%	18%	0%
B. Interview/select new employees	23%	86%	41%	5%
C. Authorise recruitment budgets/staffing levels	14%	36%	77%	5%
D. Carry out procedures for termination of employment	18%	64%	41%	5%
E. Formulate a corporate resourcing strategy	5%	23%	73%	5%
F. Administer promotion schemes	36%	50%	41%	0%
G. Implement an induction programme	27%	77%	14%	0%

**B. Performance measurement, reward and development**

	Support /Admin.	Prof. /Specialist	Senior	N/A
A. Administer reward and benefits schemes	55%	55%	23%	0%
B. Determine the levels of reward and benefits	5%	55%	73%	0%
C. Develop corporate reward strategies	5%	36%	68%	9%
D. Carry out performance appraisals	23%	73%	46%	5%
E. Decide on training activities and methods	9%	68%	64%	5%
F. Implement equal opportunities programmes	18%	46%	46%	23%
G. Deliver training to individuals	36%	77%	27%	0%
H. Develop employee training strategies	5%	36%	77%	5%
I. Administer a job evaluation scheme	41%	68%	32%	0%

**C. Employee communication and the working environment**

	Support /Admin.	Prof. /Specialist	Senior	N/A
A. Develop an internal communications policy	5%	32%	82%	5%
B. Support the welfare of individual employees	41%	68%	14%	0%
C. Monitor health and safety policy implementation	27%	59%	32%	9%

D. Negotiate with staff representatives	9%	55%	59%	5%
E. Handle grievance and disciplinary cases	23%	55%	46%	5%
F. Develop an employee relations strategy	5%	27%	86%	0%
G. Evaluate the personnel management function	5%	27%	64%	9%
H. Develop personnel mgt information systems	5%	77%	36%	14%
I. Manage culture change programmes	9%	46%	68%	0%
J. Provide advice to other functions on employment law	9%	73%	46%	0%

#### SECTION IV: PERSONAL DETAILS

**1. Are you the head of your association?**

Yes	No
63%	37%

**2. How long have you been working for the association?**

6 years

**3. How long have you been working in personnel management in total?**

21 years

**4. Do you have a higher education degree?**

Yes	No
89%	11%

**If 'yes', in what discipline did you study? (tick main one only)**

A. Business studies	23%
B. Economics	18%
C. Social or behavioural sciences	32%
D. Humanities/Arts/Languages	0%
E. Law	5%
F. Engineering	5%
G. Natural sciences	0%
H. Other	14%

**Appendix 2. Survey participants**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>PMA QUESTIONN- AIRES SENT OUT</b>	<b>PMA QUESTIONN- AIRES RECEIVED</b>	<b>ACADEMIC QUESTIONN- AIRES SENT OUT</b>	<b>ACADEMIC QUESTIONN- AIRES RECEIVED</b>
Argentina	2	1		
Australia	1		1	1
Austria	1		3	1
Bangladesh	1			
Belgium	1		3	
Bolivia	1			
Brazil	1	2		1
Bulgaria	1		1	1
Canada	1	1	1	
Chile	1			
Colombia	1			
Cyprus			1	
Czech Republic	1		1	1
Denmark	1	1	4	
Dominican Republic	3			
Ecuador	1			
Finland	1		2	
France	2		2	1
Germany	2	1	3	
Greece	1		1	1
Hong Kong	2	1		1
Hungary	1	1	2	
India	1	1		1
Indonesia	1			
Italy	1		1	
Japan	1	1	1	1
Jordan			1	
Malaysia	1	1		1

## HR COMPETENCIES AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS PROJECT

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>PMA QUESTIONN- AIRES SENT OUT</b>	<b>PMA QUESTIONN- AIRES RECEIVED</b>	<b>ACADEMIC QUESTIONN- AIRES SENT OUT</b>	<b>ACADEMIC QUESTIONN- AIRES RECEIVED</b>
Mexico	4	1		
Netherlands	1	1	3	1
New Zealand	1	1	1	2
Norway	1	1	2	
Panama	1			
Papua New Guinea	1			
Paraguay	1			
Peru	1			
Philippines	2		1	
Poland	1		1	
Portugal	2	1	2	1
Slovak Republic	1			
Slovenia	1			
South Africa	1	1	1	1
Spain	2	1	2	1
Sri Lanka	1			
Sweden	1	1	3	
Switzerland	1			
Taiwan	1			
Thailand	1	1		1
Turkey	1			
United Kingdom	1	1	3	1
United States of America	6	1		1
Uruguay	2			
Venezuela	2	1	1	3

<b>Total no. of questionnaires</b>	70	23	48	23
<b>Total no. of countries</b>	51	22	27	20

**Appendix 3. Academic questionnaires****3a. English language responses**

Country	Code	No. of English language core texts cited (max. 3 per questionnaire)
Australia	AU	3
Austria	AT	0
Brazil	BR	0
Bulgaria	BG	0
Czech Republic	CZ	0
France	FR	0
Greece	GR	1
Hong Kong	HK	3
India	IN	3
Japan	JP	1
Malaysia	MY	3 (10 titles given in 3 groupings of texts)
The Netherlands	NL	1
New Zealand (x2)	NZ	6
Portugal	PT	0
South Africa	ZA	3
Spain	ES	illegible
Thailand	TH	3
United Kingdom	UK	3
United States of America	US	19 (first 3 only used)
Venezuela (x3)	VE	6

From the references received, the following analysis of the titles of the core personnel management textbooks which include the following words can be made:

	Personnel		HRM		Strategy		Industrial relations		Law		Other	
	IN	3	ZA	3	VE	1	IN	1	MY	1	VE	2
	UK	2	NZ	5	US	1	MY	1			JP	1
	GR	1	VE	3	AU	1	VE	1				
			US	3	TH	1	HK	1				
			MY	1								
			NL	1								
			AU	3								
			TH	3								
			UK	2								
			IN	1								
			HK	2								
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>27</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Percentage</b>		<b>13%</b>		<b>60%</b>		<b>9%</b>		<b>9%</b>		<b>2%</b>		<b>7%</b>

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#### **Appendix 4. The CRANET survey**

The Cranfield survey data we have employed in this report are based on surveys carried out in 1991, 1992, 1995 and 1999 by the CRANET-E Network. This is a pan-European network of 22 prestigious business schools that collaborate to conduct joint research and development, education and training in the field of HRM in Europe. The Centre for European HRM at Cranfield School of Management acts as the co-ordinator. The Centre analyses and co-ordinates the results of the survey from the countries involved. Joint working parties meet regularly to ensure that the survey fully reflects ongoing changes throughout Europe in its own practice. The survey data includes information about HR practitioners themselves as well as the practices that they operate in their organisations. The respondents referred to are all the most senior HR manager in their organisation. The data used in this report is from the following 22 countries: Germany, UK, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Austria, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Cyprus, Greece and Turkey.

**Appendix 5. HR competencies identified in the literature**

<p>STYLE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♣ Personal credibility</li> <li>♣ Cognitive complexity and agility</li> <li>♣ Achievement directed assertiveness</li> <li>♣ Interpersonal effectiveness</li> <li>♣ Personal management</li> <li>♣ Relationship orientation</li> <li>♣ Continuous learning</li> <li>♣ Tolerance for stress/change/ambiguity</li> <li>♣ Resilience to opposition</li> <li>♣ Creative/analytical/problem-solving approaches</li> <li>♣ Entrepreneurial drive</li> <li>♣ Adaptability</li> <li>♣ Results orientation</li> <li>♣ Team commitment</li> </ul>	<p>BUSINESS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♣ Business savvy and market knowledge/orientation</li> <li>♣ Change/culture management</li> <li>♣ Change agent</li> <li>♣ Leadership</li> <li>♣ Organisation awareness</li> <li>♣ Able to assess business impact</li> <li>♣ Strategic business perspective – business strategy formulation</li> <li>♣ Business planning and implementation – align HR with business and organisational planning process</li> <li>♣ Business process design and management</li> <li>♣ Communication and influence</li> <li>♣ Developing a learning organisation</li> </ul>
<p>ROLE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♣ Relationship facilitating/building - management/employee/union relations</li> <li>♣ Project management</li> <li>♣ Talent management</li> <li>♣ Facilitator of group relations</li> <li>♣ Information management</li> <li>♣ Responsiveness to shareholders</li> <li>♣ Encourage innovation</li> <li>♣ Action planning</li> <li>♣ Asset management and cost control</li> <li>♣ Reinforcement management</li> <li>♣ Quality process orientation</li> <li>♣ Customer value creation</li> <li>♣ Developing cultural diversity and cross-cultural sensitivity</li> <li>♣ Environmental scanning</li> <li>♣ Empowering front-line managers for HRM</li> </ul>	<p>FUNCTIONAL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♣ Knowledge and delivery of traditional HRM – reward/compensation, labour relations, training and development, organisational design/effectiveness, staffing and retention, performance management, communication, organisational learning, health and safety, information systems, grievance and discipline</li> <li>♣ Application and exploitation of information technology</li> <li>♣ Administrative tasks</li> <li>♣ Assessment/evaluation skills</li> <li>♣ Compliance with increasingly complex legislation</li> <li>♣ Coaching, consulting and developing others</li> <li>♣ Strategic staffing</li> <li>♣ Cross-functional flexibility</li> <li>♣ Clear objective setting</li> <li>♣ HR accountability</li> </ul>